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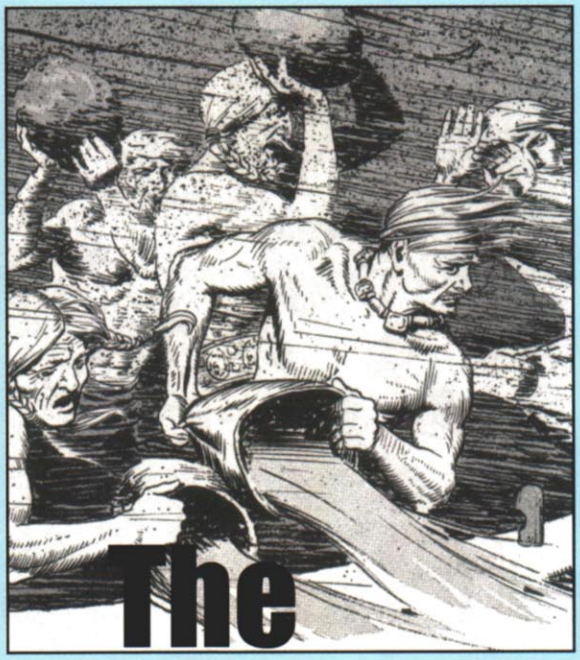
The Project for California's Future

Finally, training to cure conservatives' political 'Experience Deficit'

— *see page 5*



The Budget Perfect Storm

by Ray Haynes

'Deregulation' Blacks Out

by Walter Soul

What became of consumer choice?

by John Campbell

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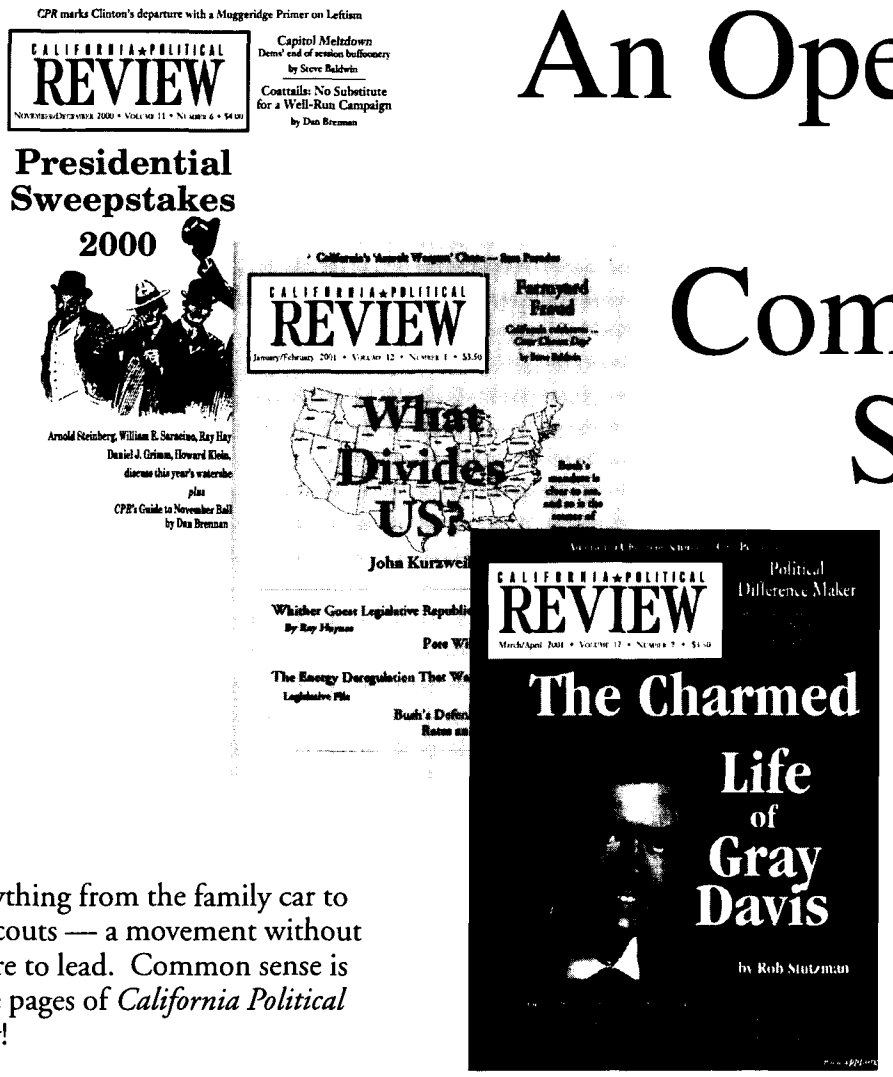

"The beginning of political wisdom is the recognition that liberalism is at the end of its intellectual tether."
— Irving Kristol

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CORRESPONDENCE

Cesar Chavez Day?

Reading [Steve] Baldwin's article ("Farmyard Fraud," *CPR*, Jan./Feb. 2001) on the farmyard hero Cesar Chavez makes one think that awarding a holiday in this country requires some universal significance; it is all from one's perspective, as has been so profoundly proven of late. While Columbus discovered the New World, he also enslaved the aborigines and introduced illness. While Jefferson was writing our Declaration, he was trysting with his property. While the veterans were saving the Republic, they were burning down grass hootches and bombing civilians hiding under bridges. While King was marching, he, too, was indulging in a Jeffersonian pastime while our government's agents enjoyed their surveil.

Humankind's faults, it seems, are endless. Where will it end, this fractiousness that trys to despoil anything another cherishes? I don't mean to imply that the author was mean-spirited. All his allegations are, no doubt, correct. But, how do the supporters of the Hero perceive these facts?

While you, and I, are vehemently opposed to the political agendas of some young Latinos and their elected elite representatives, it cannot be denied that they, and their cohorts, are sufficiently in power to proclaim their Hero's day. Who are we to judge a person's view of history as it may effect their supposed culture, or what they may claim to be a culture? Consider that while Mr. Baldwin, and so many other now-conservative elected officials, pledge to sustain and keep vital FDR's social contract, when it was enacted it, too, was tyranny.

And, yes, in many cases the ends *do* justify the means; for proof, ask all of the conservative supporters of that supposed-liberal from Missouri who brilliantly ended the last world conflict, or the CIA's operatives who, for years, slipped LSD into co-eds' cocktails. What it all may reduce to is that "one of our guys" is going to get the honor this time. At that point, none of those promoting the issue really care who "one of our guys" turns out to be. He, or she, just has to be brown, or black, or white, or ... well, one of our guys. Maybe that's good enough.

This is not intended to bring about a belief that I condone any squalid activities of the Hero, if such there were, for I certainly have exhibited weaknesses of my own. Yet, are we to condemn Columbus for rapine and plunder, or praise him for daring and discovery? Are we to condone Jefferson for his chattel while others of the time steadfastly refused to weight their consciousness so? Are we to condemn King for his agenda while we worry over our Social Security?

Maybe we could say of the Hero, instead, that he spent a lifetime trying to create a political structure in which "one of our guys" could get recognized; and, maybe ol' Cesar didn't care who he, or she, turned out to be, or if he, or she, were good or bad in some one else's view. Maybe.

Charles Benninghoff
San Juan Capistrano

Mr. Baldwin responds:

Charles Benninghoff does bring up an interesting point — that our society tends to mythologize great men — but my *point is that there are degrees to which people have been mythologized. Columbus really was a great explorer, Jefferson really did play a key role in America's founding, and King really did lead a civil rights revolution. Chavez, however, engaged in activities directly contrary to what he is being honored for. Far from being a defender of downtrod-*

(Please turn to page 29)

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SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

Assemblyman Bill Campbell never seemed to gain traction as the leader of the pachyderms in the lower house. One of the most decent, honorable, and thoughtful members of the Legislature, he may have lacked the necessary "killer instinct" to keep his Caucus happy when dealing with the Democrats. His successor, Dave Cox, was thought by many to have been an ideal "number two" for Campbell as Caucus chairman (and thereby "designated hitter," bomb thrower, and "bad cop") to Campbell's urbane leadership style. But he did not get the number two job and now has the top slot. A canny politician, Cox may be just what the GOP needs at this juncture. All conservatives in California owe a debt of thanks to Bill Campbell for his selfless leadership of many causes in past years. And though he is termed out in 2002, California will be a poorer place if it loses him from public service altogether.

Shawn Steel's election over "moderate" Brooks Firestone as state GOP chairman was a basic replay of Steel's triumph two years ago over Firestone for the vice chairmanship. Steel is an energetic conservative with a record of getting things done while working with all Party segments. If Firestone and his Party wreckers roll up their sleeves and help this time, instead of repeating the petulant pouting that followed their last drubbing, great things could happen. Steel is putting together a first-rate team, and would benefit from a CRP bylaw change giving officers four-year terms. Democrats went to four-year terms long ago and have prospered.

The energy crises may finally be exacting its pound of flesh from Grey Davis. Some months ago, polls seemed to show voters giving him a free ride while blaming everyone from George Bush (yes, though his presidency was two weeks old when some of the polls were taken) to energy producers' evil empires. But more recent surveys show movement. Two recently brought exceptionally bad news for Davis: both found the share of voters who say they are prepared to vote to re-elect him in the low 30s — bad news for any incumbent, no matter how many millions he has banked.

And this is beginning to strain the Guv's reputation as one who never, ever perspires. He lost his cool at a recent Senate GOP Caucus meeting when wily Tom McClintock questioned his bashing of power producers when he is trying to lure them and their electricity back to the state. Davis denied the bashing — an unwise move with McClintock, the Legislature's premiere researcher. Tom pulled a news clip from his pocket quoting Davis vaporizing said energy producers. Davis responded with an expletive-filled tirade against McClintock, energy companies, and just about everyone who has ever questioned his veracity — but he did not dispute the accuracy of the newspaper story.

Keep your fingers crossed: its beginning to look as though next year's Republican gubernatorial nomination may be worth going after. Davis and the Dems are showing signs of panic. Expect them to continue blaming Republicans from George Bush to Herbert Hoover for the problem. At least for now, the voters seem not to be buying the snake oil: a fascinating development, given Davis' apparent invulnerability just a few short months ago.

— A. P. C.

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Stirring up the Hive

Like African Killer Bees, establishment lawyers react quickly, fiercely, and massively — though more by reflex or instinct than conscious thought — against any move to restrain the left's long march. The good news: Bush seems to know his bees.

MARK S. PULLIAM

TWENTY YEARS AGO, Washington pundits Joe Sobran and Tom Bethell coined an expression for the liberal establishment — The Hive — that perfectly captures some of that group's bee-like characteristics: they act in unison, by reflex or instinct rather than conscious thought; they respond to signals, imperceptible to others, emanating from a rigid internal hierarchy; they are fiercely territorial; and they attack when provoked. Nowhere is the Hive mentality more evident than in the legal establishment — that self-reinforcing clique consisting of lawyers, judges, and the interest groups they jointly serve.

A recent example of hive behavior is *Legal Services Corporation v. Velazquez,* a 5-4 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court issued February 28, 2001. At issue in the case was a restriction Congress placed on the use of funds appropriated for the Legal Services Corporation, a federal program intended to provide free legal representation to indigents. In response to concerns that LSC funds were being used to engage in ACLU-style advocacy litigation, especially in opposition to welfare reform, beginning in 1996 the Republican-controlled Congress prohibited the use of LSC funds to challenge existing welfare laws. LSC funds could still be used to challenge individual welfare eligibility determinations (*i.e.,* to contest the denial of benefits to a particular person due to an *interpretation* of the law or an erroneous *factual* conclusion), but not to amend or overturn the welfare law itself.

The logic is that taxpayers should not be required to finance, through one program (LSC), an assault on laws passed by their political representatives to protect taxpayers in another program (welfare reform). Congress sought to curb the type of subsidized litigation that leads to judicial lawmaking. The LSC funding restriction represented something that rarely occurs in Washington: common sense, put into action, with results. To liberals, common sense is always a problem to be overcome. To activist litigators, other people's money is a precious nectar they cannot live without. The Hive went into action, and LSC lawyers sued to challenge the 1996 restriction.

IT TOOK some creativity to come up with a plausible legal objection to the law. After all, recipients have no constitutional right to receive government benefits such as LSC assistance and welfare. Moreover, in 1991 the U.S. Supreme Court had upheld similar content restrictions on doctors participating in a federally-funded family planning program. Congress forbade doctors employed by the program from discussing abortion with their patients. In *Rust v. Sullivan,* the Supreme Court upheld the restrictions and ruled that Congress had not discriminated against viewpoints on abortion, but had "merely chosen to fund one activity to the exclusion of the other." A selective subsidy is less restrictive than a regulation because the recipient can choose to forego the subsidy.

Rust v. Sullivan seemed to be directly on point, refuting the LSC lawyers' contention that the 1996 funding restriction violated the First Amendment. The Hive disagreed. The solid liberal bloc of John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsberg,

Mark S. Pulliam, California Political Review's *legal issues correspondent, is an attorney in private practice in San Diego.*

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THE FRONT LINE

Curing the *Experience* Deficit

California conservatives suffer from an experience shortage, especially in comparison with activists on the left whose addiction to pushing people around fosters a fanatical devotion to every kind of political intrigue which, in turn, leads them to accumulate vast stores of experience running campaigns, organizing trouble-making units small and large, holding office and recruiting and mobilizing office staff. They familiarize themselves in intricate detail with every imaginable technique for abusing governing power and public trust to further their cause: *i.e., the demolition of our* free way of life.

This unnatural progression is largely lacking for conservatives, who, for the moment, may be defined as Americans at peace with their American culture. They do not fear freedom; they do not look upon their neighbors as either taxpayers to be fleeced or serfs to be made to feel and, in fact, to become ever more helpless and victimized, and thus dependent on power, the better to prepare them to be whipped into a conquering army. No, conservatives see life as an opportunity to live productively and tend to try to do so, which is good for the economy but *not* conducive to the creation and maintenance of a standing political force to defend us against our Democrat friends, as the charitable Ray Haynes likes to call them.

As a result, when the leftist hordes attack, conservatives are often unprepared to resist on anything like equal terms. Seeing this imbalance, a new effort — The Project for California's Future — has been launched to train tomorrow's pro-free market, limited government, traditional values political activists: preparing those of us at peace with our heritage to make war to defend it.

The Project for California's Future is sponsoring two days of training, May 19 and 20, in San Diego at Woodfin Suite Hotel, Sorrento Mesa, 10044 Pacific Mesa Blvd. For full details see the Project's website: www.californias-future.org or call Ron Nehring, director of National Campaigns for San Diego-based Americans for Tax Reform, at 858/799-0720. The San Diego event is part of a broad program. The Project's literature says its "full time field force will work in each of California's 58 counties identifying individuals with strong leadership potential." The program consists of two training "modules":

One: Grassroots Campaign School — strategy and message, research, voter targeting, earned media and public relations, and finance. The grassroots school is a cooperative effort with the Leadership Institute. Founded in 1979 by Morton C. Blackwell, the Institute is a highly respected trainer of conservative local, state, and national leaders. Its alumni numbers more than 25,000, including such "movers and shakers" as Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore, Indiana Congressman David McIntosh, Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist, and former Christian Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed.

Two: Issues and Communications School — a joint effort with California's Pacific Research Institute and with Wirthlin Worldwide. PRI's seminar covers policy issues: taxes and budget, education, crime, land use and environment, and transportation, and more. Wirthlin conducts an "advanced-level program in effective communications techniques."

The schools' graduates will continue to receive information on issues and political and communications "technology." Tired of leftist Neanderthals fouling our state? Go to school and learn how to defang and sequester them out of power where their demons will haunt and devour only themselves. CPR

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and Stephen Breyer peeled off swing-vote Anthony Kennedy to form a five vote majority to overturn the funding restriction. The majority's "reasoning" was that litigation conducted by government-funded lawyers is an important form of "speech" because "courts depend [on LSC lawsuits] for the proper performance of their duties and responsibilities." Therefore, " [r]estricting LSC attorneys in advising their clients and in presenting arguments and analyses to the courts distorts the legal system ...." Virtually conceding the parasitic, collusive relationship between activist judges and activist lawyers, the majority noted that "[a]n informed, independent judiciary presumes an informed, independent bar .... The restriction imposed by the statute here threatens severe impairment of the judicial function." In other words, courts can't do their job without platoons of lawyers feeding at the public trough. Think about it. It is perfectly constitutional for Congress to regulate what a government-funded doctor can or cannot say to a patient, but it is patently unconstitutional for Congress to regulate the litigation activities of a government-funded lawyer. Only a lawyer could make this distinction with a straight face. Alas, judges *are* lawyers.

ANTONIN SCALIA'S dissenting opinion, joined by William Rehnquist, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Clarence Thomas, was appropriately scornful, pointing out that subsidies do not restrict speech and that *Rust v. Sullivan* was directly on point. Even worse, the majority re-wrote the statute when it struck down the 1996 restriction but not the LSC appropriation statute in its entirety, treating the offensive portion of the law as "severable" from the rest. Because Congress enacted the funding restriction as an integral part of the overall LSC program, the dissenting opinion pointed out that severing the funding restriction "lets the program go forward under a version of the statute Congress never enacted." In closing, Scalia noted that the ma-

WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

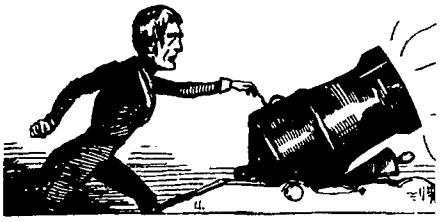
By SAM PAREDES

Fighting anti-gunners trying to end home-based dealers, license and register law-abiding gun owners, ban various guns, and generally chip away at the Second Amendment can drive a sane man crazy. Diversions are a must.

I recently had the opportunity to hunt turkey with our new Gun Owners of California lobbyist, Jim Garcia, who also happens to run Garcia Hunting Preserve. Jim and I met at the gate to his property at 6 in the morning as the sun was peeking over the horizon. We snuck to a spot Jim thought would let us call in the toms as they came down from their roost. We could hear them gobbling but they ended up going the other direction. An appointment later that morning at the capital forced us, sadly, to call it a day.

Sam Paredes is executive director of Gun Owners of California.

But we tried again at 5:30 next morning, this time starting on the *other* side of the creek. Camouflaged head to toe, we chose a spot giving the best chance to see them at first light. Jim, an expert caller, elicited an immediate response from the birds still in their roost. About an hour or so later we spotted three toms strutting around a bunch of the hens a couple hundred yards away. For several hours we tried to entice the toms in our direction, but they obviously had plenty to keep their attention where they were. Jim knew sooner or later the hens would tire of the toms and begin to move away. That would be our chance.



It took several hours of calling, spotting, stalking, and skulking to sneak up on these great old birds, which nearly became our national symbol. They played tricks on us, but finally curiosity killed the big old tom. Keeping our eyes on three toms, we lost sight of the oldest and biggest of the group. Suddenly the old tom with a 10-inch beard came over the top of the dike hiding us and the rest was something out of a cartoon. I saw the old guy 5 yards away from the corner of my eye. His eyes seemed to grow big as saucers. Just about then he watched his life flash before his eyes. What a rush!

Living life as our forefathers did, enjoying the outdoors, putting food on the table by out-smarting one of God's great creatures — life is good.

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LEGISLATIVE FILE

Pasadena state Senator Jack Scott is back with another attempt to make Californians who own guns feel like criminals. Scott's SB 52 would require, as part of a gun owners' licensing procedure, that your thumbprint be taken when you buy a gun. And once you have your government-granted license, Scott's law would require you to keep the Department of Justice apprised of your current address — the sort of Big Brother scrutiny of your movements California applies to convicted sex offenders.

One supposes the day will arrive when this social pathology called leftism comes up with something new, but it never happens. Throughout history and throughout the world, whenever any of these Jack Scott-type social misfits comes to power they exhibit the standard impulse to demonize and then criminalize the sin of resisting, or even just disagreeing with, their political program. Two objectives are served:

First, the normal relationship of government to governed is transformed from one of servant (the state) employed for specific, limited purposes by its master or sovereign (the people) into a perverse relationship of tyrant to slave with the tyrant specifying what the slave may and may not do (this sick notion is precisely what the Founders rejected in writing that our Creator endows each of us with *inalienable* rights) and,

Second, an "enemy" class is created in the public mind whose existence justifies draconian, demeaning state measures to suppress it *(i.e.,* pinning pink letters or stars on Jews, say, and forcing them to wear them in public).

Lesson one is to understand that this sort of legislation has nothing whatever to do with guns or safety or anything but power. Lesson two is to understand that what Sen. Scott needs most is adult supervision. The last time he introduced such a bill, his office reportedly shut off his phones after logging some 15,000 calls from ordinary Californians trying desperately to remind him that this is America, not China. This time, on April 4, Scott sent a memo to his legislative colleagues apologizing in advance for the flood of calls they should expect in opposition to his small exercise in paranoid despotism. Let us hope Californians will appropriately justify that apology once more.

Representing the polar-opposite in public service spirit to Jack Scott's is the California Neighborhood Initiative, a package of bills introduced by Sen. Ray Haynes and other Republicans "to maximize marketplace principles," as a Haynes' news release puts it, so as to "allow California's entrepreneurial spirit to bring sustaining economic growth" to the state's poor neighborhoods. "Our experience," Haynes said, "has reaffirmed our core belief that the citizens living in their neighborhoods are the best qualified to address their needs."

Yes, the same people Scott wants thumb-printed and tracked by the state, Haynes believes know best how to solve their own problems. His bill creates 25 "Community Renewal Communities" of local leaders to consider how best to free their neighborhoods to grow and prosper. The full package also includes AB 1508 (Runner and Leslie) prohibiting government funding discrimination against faith-based community groups that treat substance abuse; SB 846 (Ackerman), AB 1134 (Bates), SB 981 (Haynes), and AB 1591 (Leslie) creating tax credits to encourage, respectively, donation of professional services to nonprofit groups aiding the poor, commercial revitalization, land development for affordable housing, and low-income community investment.

Power to the people! And may Jack Scott slip on a banana peel (metaphorically speaking, of course). CPR

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jority's decision displays "the very fondness for 'reform through the courts' ... that prompted Congress to restrict publicly funded litigation of this sort." Score one for The Hive.

In a bold and long-overdue move, on March 22, President George W. Bush delivered a huge setback to The Hive when he announced that he was discontinuing the pre-nomination review role played by the American Bar Association for federal judicial appointments. Since President Dwight Eisenhower initiated this practice in 1953, the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary has had the extraordinary privilege of evaluating and rating the President's judicial nominees before they are even publicly announced or submitted to the Senate for "advise and consent." Over the intervening 50 years, the ABA has tilted farther and farther to the left, to the point that its public policy positions are now indistinguishable from the Democrat Party platform or the agenda of the ACLU. For example, the ABA opposes the death penalty, tort reform, welfare reform, and parental consent/notification laws, but favors abortion on demand, gun control, racial preferences, and gay rights (just to scratch the surface).

The 15-member Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary, currently chaired by strike suit mogul Bill Lerach's law partner, Patricia Hynes, consistently issued lower ratings for Republican nominees than it did for comparably qualified Democrats. The most egregious example of the ABA's bias came in 1987, when four members of the Standing Committee issued a "not qualified" rating to Robert Bork in connection with his nomination by President Reagan to the U.S. Supreme Court, despite Bork's exemplary record as tenured Yale Law School professor, Solicitor General, and judge on the D.C. Circuit. This rating was explicitly based on his views rather than his experience or competence. During the 1996 presidential campaign, Bob Dole promised to shut down the ABA's special role, but never got the chance to deliver. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it, two months into his administration George W. Bush did what "even the Gipper never could: He told the ABA to take a hike." White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales informed the ABA that "[i]t would be particularly inappropriate, in our view, to grant a preferential, quasi-official role to a group, such as the ABA, that takes public positions on divisive political, legal, and social issues that come before the courts."

This is a devastating defeat for The Hive. The White House is treating the ABA as what it is — a liberal special interest group. Call the score even, but the game isn't over. Sen. Barbara Boxer has declared war on Bush's judicial nominees, hoping Republicans will forget that the war has been raging non-stop for years. Under the leadership of George W. Bush, the Republicans are finally returning fire. CPR

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Little-News, All-Talk, No-Thought Radio

Some receive their ideological inspiration from bumper-stickers.
More sophisticated students are instructed by radio talk shows of various formats.

WILLIAM R. ALLEN

For many, the mouth is the most important part of the head. This is especially discouraging and disconcerting on the university campus and in broadcast journalism. Scholars and commentators are both in the thought-and-words business, with thought intended to precede words.

One of the fundamental functions of the academic faculty is to impress upon young scholars that, first, college kids initially know and can do little; second, that they can accomplish much by commitment to laborious, unglamorous effort in the vineyards; and, finally, that the rest of the community has little reason to take them seriously by refined criteria until they are well on their way to fulfilling substantial potential.

Unsurprisingly, few of the college clientele well receive and fully accept the harsh message of attaining professionalism through effective investment. But they are boys and girls. How about the men and women in television news? Surely, *they* are committed to producing and selling a product of sophistication.

Well, how sophisticated can be a reading of little more than headlines? Some stations try occasionally to camouflage superficiality by offering "commentary." And the commentators sometimes stress their seriousness by removing the coat and loosening the tie or squinting the eyes and furrowing the brow. But what they present is intellectual garbage — little but bias and bombast, with no theory, no deductive line of thought, no measurement, no testing of hypotheses. And sometimes they let the cat escape the bag, acknowledging that they are peddlers of garbage. After all, one news director tells us, "commentary is by its very definition not supposed to be objective ...!"

All this nonsense is predictably associated with the political-type prattling which is virtually the sole content of TV news commentary, given by innocent people of no analytic credentials. But there is more to hard news than antics in city hall, the state Capital, and the Washington Beltway, and there is more to commentary than the poetry of politics.

To express an opinion calls for the bearing of a responsibility — a responsibility of dispassion, rigor of thought, and systematic survey of relevant information. So we might expect senior people in the broadcast business to have some awareness of the usefulness of the basic analytics and applied logic of the accomplished economist.

Alas, happy-talkers of the TV news set evince the sophistication of college freshmen with respect to what are the purposes and products of economics and what economists can — and cannot — do. Television commentary is mainly talk with little thought.

* * * * *

One thing worse than no education in economics is bad education in economics. And bad education is to be found in many places in addition to classrooms. One source of terrible tutoring is the typical radio talk show.

With few notable exceptions, the circus ring-master of the interview and call-in programs is a crude, cocky, cheap-shot poseur of erudition and shrewdness

William R. Allen, although a glamorous member of the UCLA Department of Economics, is mainly ignored by everyone except Pooh, his noble dog.

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who loves to domineer and delude. He — or an Amazonian she — has an audience of innocents who are poorly prepared to protect themselves from professional charlatans and are seduced into supposing that they are participating in an intellectual exercise.

The representative talk show is ridiculous, if not reprehensible. It is unstructured, unfocused, diverted into dead-ends by questionable questions, with occasional relevant suggestions never followed up and productively pursued, requiring herky-jerky shooting from the hip by frustrated guests. In the incoherent format, the blind lead the sighted willy-nilly into alien territory and thickets of trivia while appalling the visiting analyst with uncongenial and unsophisticated shenanigans.

Genuine and seminal thought — posing pertinent questions and deducing useful answers, fruitfully applying theory and drawing on evidence, systematically and dispassionately diagnosing and prescribing — is not conducted with a format of 20-second responses to disconnected questions, with commercial breaks, promotions, and traffic reports absorbing more time than the substantive discussion.

A fellow economist and I were guests on such a show to discuss the worrisome state of the economy several years ago. We were given no opportunity to give prepared opening statements or summary conclusions. Together, we had 20 minutes actually on the air on a program spread over more than 80 minutes. And the 20 minutes divided between us — all in response to naive questions and inane comments — could not be used effectively.

WHAT BITS of wisdom and nuggets of information did the audience hear? Well, the head of an automobile company was quoted approvingly saying that the situation was the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s — a contention manifestly untrue. It was suggested that the Depression was a result of inactivity of President Herbert Hoover — a contention manifestly untrue. It was contended that the savings-and-loan fiasco was the result simply of financial deregulation and thievery — a contention manifestly untrue. Indeed, the untruths and distortions and misplaced charges and poorly founded generalizations piled up as high as an elephant's eye.

Hope springs eternal. My friend and I went onto the show to help the cause of comprehension. Instead, the professors inadvertently became participants in prostitution. So much for all-talk, no-thought radio. CPR

THE WORKING PRESS

The Role of the Press: Negligible

The Los Angeles mayoral election was determined by forces stronger than any word processor.

TIM W. FERGUSON

THE NATION'S second largest city will have a mayor governing from the left after a May runoff, but it can be said that the press played little part in that. Although the *Los Angeles Times* in a classic equivocation endorsed *both* ex-Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and City Attorney James Hahn, this election was determined by forces stronger than any word processor. Villaraigosa had the backing of organized labor and its increasingly potent army of ethnic Latino wage earners, plus allied interest groups including the greens. Hahn was backed by

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the Maxine Waters black establishment, still powerful in the center city and its halls of government. Most of the passions and potential payoffs that motivated these two camps had little connection to the issues that consume daily newspapers. And in the San Fernando Valley, where the second-tier *Daily News* endorsed a nominal Republican protégé of incumbent Richard Riordan, the boost was only enough to give him a poor third-place finish. This was a campaign of precinct organizing and television ads and sound bites.

With much of the white, business-oriented remnant of the city moving toward Hahn in the runoff (in awkward alliance with Waters), the *Times* may have to make a choice — but it is unlikely to make a difference.

And as for state Controller Kathleen Connell, not only was she, too, a non-factor in the race, getting around 5 percent of the vote, but a week after the election, no one covering state politics had even asked what it all meant for her political future.

The *Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* continue to position themselves under new ownerships for one-two status as the state's (and the West's) major newspapers. No sign that either is going to take a decidedly different political cast, however. The *Times* in April bumped up longtime political scribbler John Balzar to thrice-weekly bigfoot status on the op-ed page, where he can be expected to bring a jaded-liberal, seen-it-all outlook on national issues. Apparent loser is Robert Scheer, long the op-ed page's house lefty. He was reported to be looking around the Bay Area with wife Narda Zacchino, who landed at the *Chronicle* after wearing out her welcome in the *Times* newsroom.

Despite the success of the Fox News Channel on cable in differentiating itself from the mainstream liberal pack, no sign yet that any avowed free-market conservative sees a commercial opportunity in bigtime California media. Thus, unlike several other major U.S. metropolitan areas (including New York City), greater L.A. and the Bay Area have no obvious flag carriers for the right and reality checks for the left. In San Diego, this role really belongs to a radio talk host, Roger Hedgecock.

Not surprisingly, the municipal political drift in both Los Angeles and San Francisco is sharply to the left.

Unlike several other major U.S. metropolitan areas (including New York City), greater L.A. and the Bay Area have no obvious flag carriers for the right and reality checks for the left.

Nationwide, an example of how isolated but powerful media counters to the Big Media hive mentality can open the door to more balanced reporting could be seen in the questioning of Jesse Jackson's financial finagling. Only after the tabloid *National Enquirer* kick-started inquiries into the Reverend's personal and pecuniary affairs, aided by the Bill O'Reilly show on Fox News and the *New York Post,* did most American journalists begin to look askance at Jackson. Even the *LA Times* managed a front-page examination, about 20 years overdue.

How many local race and ethnicity hustlers go unchallenged around the country still? It takes a provocateur like David Horowitz to break the polite white-liberal silence about their tactics. (And even *then* some major media are deaf. The *LA Times* published an article about Horowitz's no-reparations-for-slavery ad campaign in college newspapers on April 10, weeks after the campus uproar had spread across the country.)

It's hard to know how the power crisis will shake out in the 2002 elections, but the big winners so far are the Capitol press corps. They are actually covering a story that most Californians care about. They even have to watch what they wear in front of the TV cameras. CPR

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Parents Television Council

William E. Saracino

CPR Editorial Board member William E. Saracino is chief operating officer of the Parents Television Council.

An organization whose self-proclaimed goal is to "bring responsibility to the entertainment industry" cannot be accused of being a shrinking violet or lacking in ambition. Hopelessly naïve about the possibility of bringing some sense of order and goodness back to our twenty-first century America, perhaps. But that combination of ambition and belief that the society and culture are worth the effort to preserve are principally what drove me to join with the Parents Television Council (PTC).

On February 1 of this year I became the chief operating officer (my friends may now call me "coo") of the PTC at its office in Los Angeles. I had some familiarity with the PTC through an acquaintance of many years with its founder and president, Brent Bozell, and through newspaper ads it had run featuring the late, great Steve Allen. It was only after deciding that the job matched my desire to return to Los Angeles however, that I discovered, one, how degraded the medium had actually become and, two, how successful the PTC promises to be in changing that.

My television viewing habits had fallen into the comfortable pattern of Fox and CSPAN for news; all ESPN and Fox-Sports stations simultaneously for leisure; Turner Classic Movies and American Movie Classics for entertainment; Emeril on The Food Channel to keep me humble about my own culinary prowess; and the occasional foray into Nick at Night to "I Love Lucy," the Three Stooges, and other high-minded diversions. Commercial television had almost ceased to exist, at least as far as my remote and I were concerned.

Being the typical male, I, of course, landed on the commercial networks occasionally as I endlessly power-surfed through the gazillion channels now offered. But being of sound mind I almost never stopped and actually watched what they offered. So I was an innocent in the matter of how low commercial television had sunk. But a quick mention to relatives with children aged anywhere from three to mid-teens quickly disabused me of any notion that the problem wasn't serious. The news of

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my new position was universally greeted by these folks with a laundry list of what was wrong with television, especially that aimed at kids, and their own personal horror stories.

I could fill all 36 of this publication's pages to describing those horrors. Of particular concern to PTC is what used to be called "the family hour," the first hour of prime time, from 8 — 9 pm. One wag has described most of what passes for entertainment on a nightly basis as "a trip through a sewer in a glass bottom boat." Steve Allen made the point somewhat differently but equally effectively. He said families ought to be able to send their children from the dinner table into the family room without having to worry that every single value and moral lesson that has been communicated around that table would be contradicted and trashed from the TV tube. That seems a reasonable thing to expect, does it not? Yet any venture into nightly commercial television will quickly show how unrealistic that expectation would be.

If Marshall McLuhan was correct that the medium is the message, than the medium of television has become a trough of vulgarity, gratuitous sex and violence (portrayed as totally free of consequences), and a showcase to present authority figures from parents to teachers to businessmen to clergy of all denominations as morons, predators, and worse.

So what's to be done?

First, PTC recognizes and promotes the fact that it is the prime responsibility of parents to take responsibility for their children, and that, of course, includes what they watch on television. That seems a cliché, but is worth repeating, as it is sometimes overlooked and, of course, is the ultimate and most effective means of protecting your children from infection through the 27- or 37-inch diagonal black hole in your family room.

Second, PTC opposes attempts at governmentally-sanctioned solutions to this problem. Government at any level deciding what you can watch (or read or say) opens a pandora's box of potential problems, which, once unleashed, could have far-reaching and exceptionally negative consequences.

The PTC approach is to galvanize public opinion, then use that public force to work with the networks and sponsors to improve the fare offered through the tube.

Thanks in large part to Steve Allen's Herculean efforts, the PTC's national membership is approaching 700,000. These people are by definition activists — they took the time to join us — as well as people concerned about helping us drain the swamp of nightly television. But what, specifically, is there to galvanize these folks about?

That's where the PTC research and analysis division comes in. PTC records every hour of prime time shown on the six major networks and several of the major cable channels each night. Then, next day, our researchers analyze the shows for content, with this analysis entered into our Entertainment Tracking System database. Our ETS database currently has more than 70,000 hours of prime time television analyzed and archived for easy retrieval and comparison.

The results of our analyses are then communicated to our members and others through our website — *www.parentstv.org* — our monthly newsletter "The In-

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sider," and our E-alerts sent through the Internet, and to the general public through press releases and press conferences. Concerned members and parents can quickly and easily learn a show's rating — and the reason for it — through any of these means.

Our flagship publication, the "Family Guide to Prime Time TV," is widely distributed not only to our members but also to commercial sponsors, network executives, and the entertainment media. Its exclusive TV show rating system is the most comprehensive source of information available about network TV's prime-time fare from a family values perspective, and is the only content-based guide in existence for all prime time television shows currently appearing on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, UPN, and WB. (As an aside, we also monitor the newest network, PAX, but its stated mission of bringing family-friendly fare to television indicates it will appear on our "good things" list, not our "avoid" list. Readers should be sure to find PAX and give it a viewing).

The "Family Guide" is updated weekly at our website. It gives parents and TV sponsors the critical information they need to make family-safe viewing and sponsorship decisions.

And speaking of sponsorship decisions, that brings us to the work the PTC attempts to do with the networks and the advertisers. Frankly, the networks almost always pretend to be interested in our concerns, but also almost always are really concerned, first and last, about their own bottom line. Content is secondary to them — seen only as a means to achieve a solid profitability.

That, of course, is where the sponsors come in. Their advertising dollars create the networks' bottom lines. Sponsors must be concerned about the views of their products' consumers and potential consumers. The PTC has a growing army — almost 700,000 consumers nationally — and that, frankly, is how we catch advertisers' attention. The late Senator Everett Dirkson had a saying about politicians, that sometimes "in order to make them see the light, you need to make them feel the heat." Our members are our means of making sponsors "see the light." Our ability to alert our members to put pressure on advertisers either to stop sponsoring trash or start (or continue) sponsoring family-friendly shows has allowed PTC to succeed in several recent efforts. We have promoted good programming like "Touched By an Angel," "Seventh Heaven," and, most recently, "DOC," the PAX network's newest offering.

But we have also succeeded in convincing national sponsors to withdraw advertising or stay away from offensive programming like Howard Stern's gross-out show on CBS, "Action," "WWF Smackdown," "Temptation Island," and most recently "Boston Public." Additionally, the PTC-inspired wave of national protests against trash TV (again, especially in early prime time from 8 - 9), resulted in more than 40 major TV sponsors — with combined advertising budgets in the billions of dollars — forming the Family Friendly Programming Forum, dedicated to spending their sponsorship dollars to give families more wholesome programming choices.

It's actually a wonderful lesson in the free enterprise system. A sponsor that hears from thousands of consumers around the country must, as a matter of survival, listen to them. PTC may provide the target and the suggested message, but it is our 700,000 members who give that message the power to impact the target — television sponsors.

We at PTC are proud of what we have accomplished in the six short years of our existence. Yet we realize we have only scratched the surface and that the battle will be long. We have ambitious plans to continue to grow our membership and make them an even more effective grass roots force for quality TV programming.

We are currently expanding our ETS database system, and converting our 70,000 hours of programming from video cassettes to DVD format to prevent deterioration and loss of the taped originals. We intend to expand the number of cable channels we record and analyze on a nightly basis to provide even more comprehensive guidance for concerned parents and advertisers. We will continue to issue exhaustively researched and extensively documented reports on the trends — mostly disturbing — in prime-time TV. These reports are widely, and increasingly, used by the television, radio, and print media in the burgeoning national debate about the link between popular entertainment and violence, especially among our young people. We are renewing this year our national campaign to restore the 8 - 9 pm "family hour" as a safe haven parents can rely upon for family friendly programming.

And our goal of forming a productive working relationship with both networks and sponsors is of course a work in progress. To many of these folks we are still the new kids on the block. However that is changing with our aggressive efforts to make the networks and sponsors understand our members' concerns. More importantly, we aim to make them understand, one, that we are serious about cleaning up television and bringing responsibility to the entertainment industry and, two, that we are here to stay.

Ambitious? Challenging? Heck yes. But who'd want it any other way? CPR

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The Budget Perfect Storm

by Ray Haynes

The Andrea Gail captain's decision to make one last fishing trip was a fatal mistake. Wisdom and history told the old fishermen in last year's film *The Perfect Storm* not to leave port so late in the season. Bad weather was always a factor that time of year, but the captain thought he could handle it, knowing he had the best vessel in port and that he was the best captain. So he made his fatal decisions to go and then to head further to sea. He could have made it had his radio worked, allowing him to learn of the storm earlier. He could have made it had his refrigerator worked, allowing him to wait out the storm. In fact, he and his crew could have made it had any of several factors tilted their way. But the key factor was the first decision: leaving so late in the season invited the disaster that was

Republican Whip Ray Haynes represents California's 36th state Senate District.

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visited upon the Andrea Gail, its captain, and its crew.

Democrats now captain the California equivalent of the Andrea Gail. They have controlled at least one legislative house every year since 1958. For all but four years of that time they have controlled *both* houses. Nothing happens in California without their consent. Most things that occur were their ideas. From 1958 to 1966, from 1974 to 1982, and from 1998 to today they have run the whole show. Most of the laws that have handed our business environment to environmentalists, our legal system to trial lawyers, and our state budget to public employee unions were enacted between 1974 and 1982. Our Democrat friends in the Legislature have dutifully served these environmentalist, trial lawyer, and union policy masters since 1982, protecting them from GOP governors, even during one year of Republican control of the Assembly. Budget and policy decisions have fed this evil triad. For years, however, California was not seriously damaged because Republican governors blunted the impact of bad Democrat ideas. Then, in 1998, that 16-year Republican prophylactic against liberal policy diseases broke down. The result? The perfect budget storm.

We are reaching the confluence of the various storms, and like the Andrea Gail in the movie, are about to be tossed and turned.

What *is* this perfect budget storm? Just as in the movie, where the cataclysm resulted from a collision of three major Atlantic Ocean storm fronts, California's perfect budget storm is a collision of consequences from 25 years of bad policy decisions coming together all at once. The collision is now imminent, and appears unavoidable, although it was, before now, totally avoidable.

The bad policy decisions can easily be listed: (a) environmental regulations that seek to avoid every imagined slight to the environment that might result from human activity, (b) a budget-writing ideology that assumes it is more important to grow government than to serve people, and (c) government policies that feed liberal special interests tons of money that would otherwise go to roads, jobs, or cops, or remain in the hands of those who created it in the first place.

The bad effects for California — amounting to a continuing collapse of our quality of life — are also easily listed. Our roads are crowded. We can't afford to buy a house. We don't have enough water. We don't have enough gasoline or natural gas, and we are running out of electricity. Of course, our Democrat friends have simple explanations for all of these problems: The oil companies are evil profiteers. The developers are evil profiteers. Too many people drive too many cars. Too many people don't conserve enough water, power, gasoline, and heat.

You are the problem.

People use too much. Government is not forcing enough conservation. Government is allowing too many people to make too much profit. Government isn't forcing more people into mass transit. Government isn't forcing more people to use less gas, water, and electricity. So, people are causing their own problems, and the solution is more government. The solution is more government control over when we drive, when we wash our clothes, when we run our air conditioners, when we turn on our lights at home, how we run our businesses, how we use our computers, when and how we flush our toilets: more government control of every aspect of our lives.

This perfect storm began three and a half years ago with the huge increase in government spending by Governor Gray Davis. Total state spending in Pete Wilson's last full-year budget (1997-98) was $56.3 billion, general fund. Davis proposes spending $82.8 billion in the 2001-02 budget. That is a $26.5 billion increase in three years. It took *twelve* years of Republican governors to increase the general fund budget that much. In 1998, the total number of state employees was 264,551. Davis proposes 317,389 employees in 2001-02, an increase of 53,000 employees. That increase is greater than the entire growth of government in both the Wilson and Deukmejian administrations. Davis did nothing to control spending. Davis did nothing to control the increase in the size of government. Davis began brewing the first storm front three and half years ago by his failure to act.

The approaching energy crisis storm front was first indicated two years ago when gasoline and natural gas prices began increasing. In 1999, gasoline rose 20 to 30 cents per gallon in the space of a month or two.

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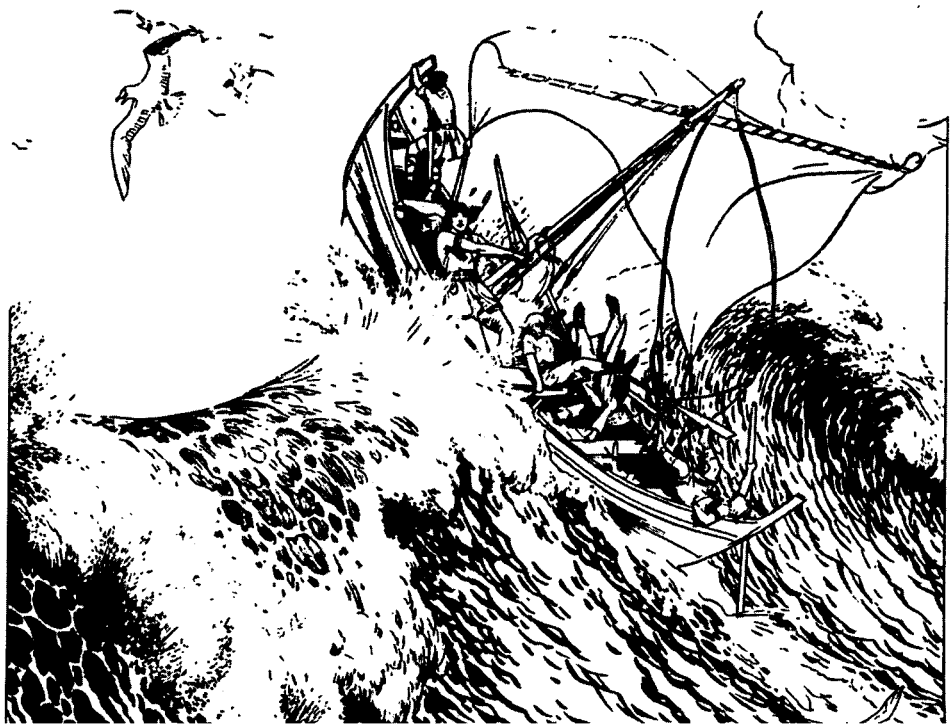
East Coast natural gas prices doubled in 1999 and 2000. Electricity prices doubled in San Diego last year. All these price changes were signals of structural problems in energy supply. Price increases are symptoms, not causes. They signal shortages, a problem impossible to eliminate by killing the messenger through price controls. Price controls make shortages pervasive and chronic, which, in turn, makes high prices pervasive and chronic. Governor Davis's failure to act when these signals were blaring allowed the second storm front to gather and set into motion toward the collision now occurring.*

Which brings us to this year's budget morass. In January, Davis began buying what is called the "net short" electricity for California. The net short is the amount of electricity the state uses that our utilities neither produce nor have under contract to buy. As of this writing (early April), buying this "net short" is costing California taxpayers $50 million per day: about *$1.6 billion* per month. This huge expenditure is putting a crimp in the state's cash flow, not to mention the dreams of California's leftists for a socialist paradise. To solve this huge problem, Davis proposed, and the Legislature approved, selling $10 billion in revenue bonds, to be repaid from your utility bills. Initially, everyone estimated this would still leave the state subsidizing about $2 billion of electricity purchases, but with an $8 billion surplus, this could be handled.

Now we know that the surplus estimate may be too high, given the cooling economy, and the estimate of the subsidy is way too low. That subsidy may be $6 to $8 billion all by itself (rather than the $2 billion originally estimated), which will eat up all the projected surplus (if, in fact, there is a surplus after all). The Speaker of the Assembly and the PUC have just announced that rate increases are inevitable to pay for the electricity, so we now have the worst of all possible worlds: higher rates, higher taxes, rolling blackouts, and a slumping economy. Spending on electricity is continuing unabated, and the governor has recently begun borrowing money, through the use of revenue anticipation notes (RANs) to pay for the expense. Davis also proposed taking over the transmission lines for the electricity, a cost of $5-7 billion, and also proposed condemning power plants, another untold billion-dollar expenditure. Democrats in the Legislature want the government to take over the entire electrical production and distribution system. The costs involved in this project would be staggering.

Something has to give. Revenue anticipation notes assume enough future revenue will be received to pay off the notes when they come due *and,* at the same time, to pay the state's ongoing bills — a large assumption, given all the government's miscalculated predictions thus far about the costs of keeping the lights on. In addition, while we borrow to pay for current electrical charges, we are also borrowing to repay the treasury for past electrical purchases. These dollars begin to add up, and the more money the state borrows, the more expensive borrowing becomes because interest rates rise. No one is planning to curtail state spending on things like the fast-increasing "Healthy Families" health care scheme or the governor's ill-conceived expanded middle school program. The budget storm clouds are billowing blacker, with thunder rolling, lightning flaring, and California's Andrea Gail sailing straight for the eye.

Through it all, Republicans are doing a decent job



See Walter Soul's "'Deregulation' Blacks Out," page 19, following.

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of setting out their goals. Given our minority status, without a governor, our voice in this process is small. We cannot propose or dispose of any policy initiative. We cannot credibly promote a solution to the energy crisis, because we don't have the votes. We have picked a few issues and attacked the Democrats on them.

One of the more interesting issues, one that has come to dominate the budget process, has been the question of staff vacancies in state government. It seems our state bureaucrats sometimes dislike the Legislature's decisions on how they spend their money. To avoid legislative oversight, these bureaucrats sometimes use funds budgeted or employee payroll *not* to hire and pay state employees (they just leave budgeted positions vacant), but instead to buy the things they want. Many state agencies' vacancy rate is a whopping 15-to-20 percent. State law requires that positions not filled in six months be terminated, so, to prevent loss of the unfilled positions, bureaucrats "churn" them, moving employees from job to job in six month intervals. It is a shameless shell game, masterfully pursued by Davis's department heads. Senate Republican Leader Jim Brulte and GOP senate budget negotiator Dick Ackerman uncovered the con, and made it public. This has changed the dynamic of the budget process at least for now, forcing Democrats to play defense. For the first time in nearly a decade, Republicans have exerted some influence at the "subcommittee" stage, which had become a more or less rubber stamping part of the budget process where thousands of small but critical decisions are made shaping the state's annual spending plan. For the last few years, Democrats have just signed off on requests for new employees with no critical assessment of agencies' needs (in stark contrast to the Wilson years, when Democrats somehow found the energy to exercise oversight with great precision and thoroughness). For several weeks now, agencies and departments have been working overtime to justify every new position they request, and to explain current vacancies. Small victories in the scheme of things, but folks who find themselves in the position of Legislative Republicans revel in such minor triumphs. It is something.

We are, however, reaching the confluence of the various storms, and like the Andrea Gail in the movie, are about to be tossed and turned. There is little to be done about it now, although the consequences of this perfect budget storm could be devastating. We may be locked into long-term debt, long-term energy shortages, and long-term high utility rates all at once, and still face electricity blackouts for the foreseeable future. The only way out of this storm is to change directions, to recognize our mistakes, and to correct them. Davis will have to make some decisions, step on his supporters' toes, and move quickly. In other words, the governor would have to go completely out of character. So far, Davis has been particularly bad at decision-making, has never moved quickly, and has not stepped on supporters' toes, except occasionally those of legislative Democrats, and never that to do anything wise or constructive, but only to make embarrassing pronouncements about how their role is to implement the Davis vision, as if one existed. Like the captain of the Andrea Gail, this governor believes he can weather this storm, which means: be re-elected. But this storm is not like past storms. Unfortunately, if it sweeps this governor away, a lot of us are going to be battered and swamped too.

So — what are Republicans to do? Stay out of the wheel house, off the captain's bridge. His protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, Gray Davis got us here. He and his Democrat friends in the Legislature have to get us out. Republicans can make suggestions, but our votes are not needed to implement any solutions. To the extent proposed solutions expand government, we should not support them, and the wise strategy thus far has been to deny Democrats that support. Criticize where appropriate. Vote yes when the Democrats are doing the right thing. Vote no when they are not. This whole matter will be solved, or will collapse, with or without GOP participation. Republicans have no reason to sign on in support of Democrat efforts to expand government, and good reason to deny the liberals the cover of a phony "bi-partisan" mandate for their radical mishandling of state finance and the people's money.

It is increasingly clear to legislative Democrats, to the press, and to the public that this governor lacks ability to lead, whatever the crisis. But Davis is doing everything he can to blame this on Republicans, even though we control nothing, and can do nothing to stave off the storm. California will soon find itself in the middle of a three-way collision of runaway government growth, energy short-fall, and a dominant left-wing ideology that won't consider doing anything that might actually help lessen the approaching fury. This fiasco belongs to Davis and the Democrats, at least for now. We should leave it to them. It may seem unsporting to win through the other guy's incompetence rather than through our own skill, but given the GOP record in the last few elections and budget battles, we'll take a win any way it comes. And unless something drastic happens, Republicans may win something big simply because Davis doesn't know what he is doing. CPR

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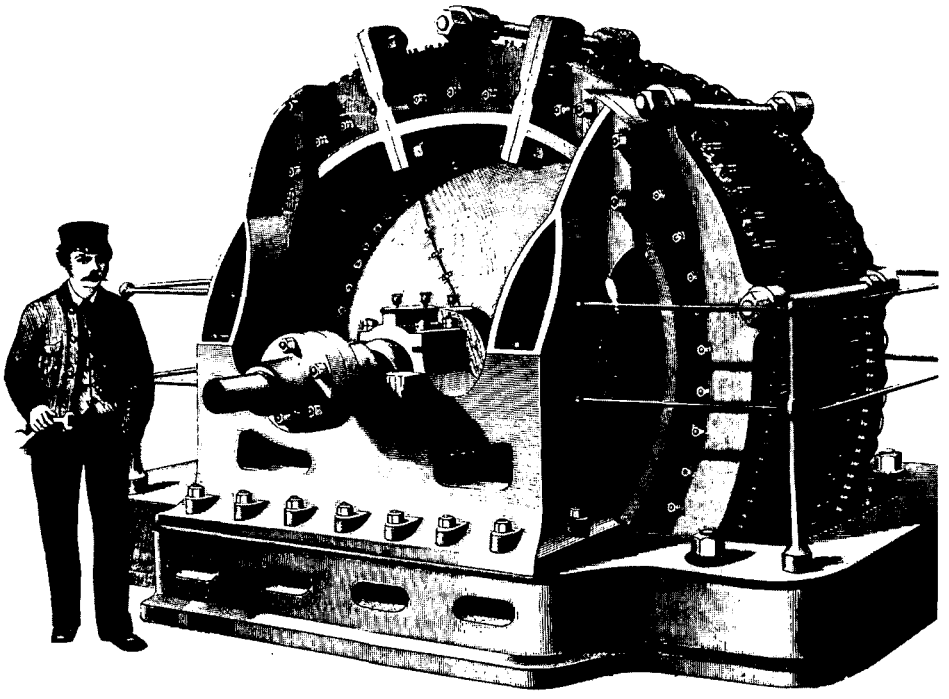

'Deregulation' Blacks Out

by Walter Soul

Republicans, Democrats, industry, and consumers hailed the state's 1996 plan to move toward a freer electric power market. But like a horse designed by a committee, California deregulation became a camel that won't run. Why has 'dereg' failed to deliver? Who is to blame? And who will take the political fall?

So far this year, all we have heard from Gray Davis about California's power crisis is "It's not my fault." "The Republicans did deregulation, I just inherited it." "Out of state power generators are gouging California consumers." "The legislature did it." "Pete Wilson did it." "Pete Wilson's PUC did it." "The utilities did it." "I didn't do anything." On that last point he is correct, and that is the problem. The real story on this energy crisis is that it was entirely avoidable, right up until January of 2001. A leader with intestinal fortitude would have been able to resolve this problem quickly without spending taxpayer dollars. Gray Davis has no guts, so he did nothing, and because he did nothing, we are facing higher rates and chronic blackouts. What is worse, as it now stands, there is no end in sight for those high rates

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and chronic blackouts, not this year, not next year, and, at the rate we're going, not even the year after that.

This is the story of how we got where we are. There were plenty of mistakes committed by everyone, including Republicans, and there is plenty of blame to go around, but the key to our current crisis is Gray Davis and his inability to make a decision.

To understand the electricity crisis, it is important to know the actors in the electricity debate. First, there are the retailers of electricity. They can be either investor-owned utilities, IOUs for short, or government-run utilities. California has (or had, as bankruptcies proceed) three IOUs: Southern California Edison, Pacific Gas and Electric, and San Diego Gas and Electric. Our government-run utilities include the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). Most people buy power for their businesses or homes from these entities. Current law gives them geographical monopolies on the retail sale of power.

Second, there are energy generators. Some IOUs and government retailers generate their own electricity. Much of it, today, is bought from various generating businesses: hydroelectric plants at dams, generating plants that burn natural gas, and those that generate electricity from wind, solar power, biomass, or other "renewable" sources. Generators that are independent of the IOUs and government systems sell their power to the retailers.

Let's begin this story at the beginning. In 1992, the federal government began the process of deregulating the nation's power markets. Deregulation has been an unqualified success in every industry it has been tried: airlines, trucking, telephones — all serve us better and more cheaply today than they did in the 1960s and '70s because the federal government largely quit the business of telling these businesses what to do. In the electrical market, at that time, federal regulators set the price of electricity generation according to a "cost plus reasonable profit" calculation, with the feds defining "reasonable." The generators pushed for federal deregulation, arguing that this system distorted markets, leading to waste — which increased costs for all involved — and was unnecessary because, as economic science and experience invariably teach, free market competition would provide power more efficiently and fairly than could even the most well-intentioned bureaucratic regulation. They succeeded with legislation, passed in 1992, that started the nation on the road to electric power deregulation.

In 1994 and '95, the California Public Utilities Commission began holding hearings, and then announced a deregulation plan to deal with the federal changes. The PUC's announcement hit the IOUs like a body blow — Edison's stock lost 30 percent of it value almost overnight while SDG&E saw a large loss of its equity. Why? The biggest issue was the utilities' so-called "stranded costs" — the costs to utilities of bad government regulation. For instance, in the 1970s "renewable" resources — wind, solar, and the like — had become a liberal *cause célèbre*, even though, or perhaps precisely because, their high costs made them unprofitable in a free, competitive market. To "jump start" their development, the Jimmy Carter and Jerry Brown administrations used federal and state power to force the IOUs into this "renewable" energy business, saddling them with extraordinarily long-term, exorbitantly high-priced contracts. The utilities protested, lost, and then passed the cost of this government-created waste on to rate-paying consumers who, in the government-created monopoly market, had nowhere else to go for electricity.

Although "consumer advocates" rarely bother to notice this sort of thing, businesses that don't profit stop doing business, just as most of us would quit our jobs if our employers stopped paying us. And the only way business can continue to profit when government forces it to use its resources wastefully is to pass the costs of that waste on to its customers. And what makes the customers pay? Monopoly — give them nowhere else to go. The U.S. Postal Service has

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survived for centuries by employing this surefire method.

Thus, California's investor-owned utilities saw that full retail-level deregulation would give electricity consumers an escape hatch. They could avoid paying the "stranded" costs simply by moving to new retail energy sellers that had never been forced into the wasteful wind, solar "renewable energy" binge. The IOUs argued, first and quite rightly, that the government had forced them into these bad investments, and, second and quite wrongly, that therefore the government ought to "protect" them: *i.e.*, continue their retail market monopolies at least until the innocent consumers had paid the price for the liberals' cherished windmills and solar panels. In this context, the Legislature took up the call to oversee deregulation in 1996.

Deregulation has been an unqualified success wherever it's been tried: airlines, trucking, telephones — all serve us better and more cheaply today than they did in the 1960s and '70s.

The many details of the 1996 negotiations preceding enactment of what ultimately was labeled a "deregulation" bill have been recited in the press in great detail. Suffice it here to say that three overriding factors interfered with a "true" California deregulation of the electricity markets. First, the Democrats, who controlled the Senate at the time, simply feared *any* form of deregulation and *any* move to markets in electricity. Second, so-called "consumer activists," ignoring economics, argued vociferously, making up in wrath what they lacked in honesty or understanding, that freedom would permit the utilities to "gouge" consumers. These ideological activists and Senate Democrats reinforced one another's positions. Finally, the utilities (excepting PG&E) feared the "stranded costs" consequences of market competition. All combined to produce "half" deregulation, with retail prices capped to satisfy the activists, a "competition transition charge" (CTC — to recover stranded costs) imposed on any retail sale of electricity to satisfy the IOUs, and, to satisfy Democrat politicians, the PUC retaining lots of control, completely contrary to the whole deregulation idea. This last mistake in particular — leaving the PUC 'way too much regulatory power — came back to haunt "deregulation." For example, it was the state Public Utilities Commission, not the original bill, that forced the IOUs to divest much of their own generating capacity and kept them from signing long-term contracts with electricity suppliers. When wholesale electricity spot market prices roared off into the stratosphere, the IOUs had no alternative but to pay them, and then, under retail price caps, couldn't pass their steeply increased costs on to their customers. These PUC policies were not required by the original bill, and Republicans were not consulted about them when they were imposed.

But all that was in the future. When the original bill passed, Republicans believed the intrusions it allowed into the market would be small and relatively short-lived. The CTCs, along with the retail price caps, would end as soon as the stranded costs were recovered, and the CTC was set higher here than in other deregulating states precisely to shorten the time until full deregulation. Given California's 1996 power *surplus*, Republicans believed these compromises with true deregulation would have little impact at the retail level.

That, we now know, is where Republicans failed the consuming public. We've seen that the size of the CTC ultimately prevented real retail competition, that the price cap pushed the IOUs to bankruptcy, and that the PUC just couldn't give up an ounce of control over one of the last markets it regulated. Republicans thought Cal-

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ifornia could transition to a deregulated market with partial deregulation. They acquiesced in the interventionist strategies pushed by Democrats, bureaucrats, and those in the private sector who make money from regulation. Republicans did not realize that those making money from regulation have an economic interest in deregulation's failure. Giving either government bureaucrats or their private sector allies a degree of regulatory power allows them to interfere with the market to protect their vested economic interests. Republicans' failure was not demanding the true deregulation Pennsylvania and Texas passed at the same time California enacted its half measure. Texas and Pennsylvania power costs have plummeted while California's have skyrocketed — the price of thinking half a loaf is better than none.

Even so, for two years, it looked as though the strategy would work. In 1996, California had a 30 percent surplus of power, with prices 25 to 50 percent higher than the rest of the country. For two years those prices dropped, and it appeared California would make it to a true free market without serious problem. In 1998, leaders of the legislative negotiations were bragging about how well the system was working, and, indeed, it was. But signs of dysfunction began to appear in early 1999. No retail competition could develop, mainly because of the CTC. Any generator that gained a new retail customer had to pay the CTC to the IOU that had lost the customer. And our CTC was set so high that no new generator could compete with the local monopoly. The IOUs were able to preserve their nearly 100 percent market share.*

Also, in summer 1999, prices at the wholesale level began to spike, evidence of a looming shortage. At the time, California had not approved a new generating plant in 10 years, mainly due to suffocating environmental and permitting requirements. Demand skyrocketed as California became home to the new e-economy, with its absolute dependence upon abundant electricity. The utilities began warning lawmakers of an impending problem, but no one listened. In summer 2000, the roof crashed in.

As anticipated, the steep CTC charges quickly retired IOUs' stranded costs, so that in May 2000, SDG&E was freed from retail price caps — but with no retail-level competition and with neither long-term supply contracts nor adequate generating capacity of its own to protect it against the often violent swings in electricity's spot market. Less than a month later, California's shortage became real, and wholesale "spot" prices went through the ceiling. San Diego electricity bills doubled and tripled as SDG&E passed those costs on to its customers. Some customers were spared. UC San Diego and San Diego State University, for instance, had entered into retail contracts with providers other than SDG&E despite the CTCs, and their bills were unaffected by the spot market price spikes. But most customers had shunned third-party providers to keep their safe, old IOU. They paid dearly for that miscalculation. San Diego was being killed by soaring prices and crying for relief.

The PUC, not the original bill, forced IOUs to divest their generating capacity and kept them from signing long-term supply contracts.

Had the governor and legislators acted *then* to deal with the real causes of what has now become a true crisis, it could have been resolved within existing rate structures. Republicans called for a special session to deal with the issue. "Let's act now," they said, "to avert a collapse of our electricity market." Gray Davis, ridiculing their call for a special session as "election year partisan posturing," took no action. Other Democrats, however, reacted as Democrats almost always do: while blaming the utilities for "gouging" retail customers, they reimposed re-

*See "What Became of Consumer Choice?" by Hon. John Campbell, page 24, following.

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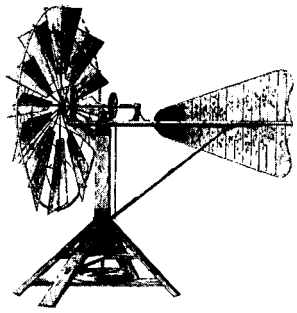
tail price caps in San Diego, trapping SDG&E and the other IOUs in a market of soaring wholesale costs with no way to recover them.

It should be noted here that increasing price is not itself a problem, but a symptom of a deeper problem. In an unregulated market — wholesale energy, for instance — steeply increasing prices are evidence of a severe shortage. A shortage can be apportioned in the commodity in two ways: through increased price, allowing the market to determine how much and to whom the commodity is sold, or through government command, with the state setting price caps and then deciding how much of the commodity is sold to whom. The first method encourages conservation and attracts capital to alleviate the shortage. The second brings chronic high prices and shortages while making everyone more dependent on politicians. That is what is happening now.

Davis could have avoided this whole mess any time before January 2001 by loosening up the PUC's control over the market. That would have permitted the investor-owned utilities to acquire a steady supply of electricity at relatively low prices. They could have stabilized their costs and recaptured them within the existing retail rate structure, instead of having to raise rates steeply and end up heading toward bankruptcy. But Davis simply left the IOUs to absorb the shortages' costs. The governor and his Democrat colleagues in the Legislature, through an overall lack of decision combined with some just plain bad decisions, transformed California's investor-owned utilities from billion dollar corporate giants to bankrupt businesses in six short months. California now faces chronic shortages, periodic blackouts, and higher prices for the foreseeable future. There is no plan to increase supply, but the altogether avoidable economic dislocation resulting from this fiasco may actually supply the solution by decreasing demand as people lose jobs and businesses close and leave the state. That is a poor solution for most Californians — the only quick way to serve the peoples' interests now is to increase supply. (Not that that much interests left-wing politicians, of course, who often succeed in turning bad situations into excuses to increases their political power.)



Were there problems in the 1996 deregulation bill? Absolutely. Were Republicans complicit in enacting those structural problems into law? Yes. Should Republicans have demanded a relaxing of environmental regulations to allow construction of dams and other energy plants to meet increasing demand? Without question. But to say, as Davis now does, that he "inherited" this problem from the Wilson Administration is patently false. *Davis* failed to act. *Davis* was repeatedly warned of an impending disaster. And *Davis* chose to ignore the warnings. Far more than any Republican failure to resist sufficiently Democrats' and liberal agitators' statist foolishness, Davis's indecision is to blame for the rate increases, blackouts, and resulting economic dislocations now plaguing our state.

Still failing to lead, the governor now finds scapegoats everywhere, blaming Pete Wilson, Republicans in general, the Legislature, "Texas price gougers," George Bush, and certainly many others before he's through — perhaps tobacco companies, gun makers, and the Boy Scouts. The fact is, Davis failed in his duty of leadership, seeking re-election while fleeing responsibility. The pain goes to California residents, ratepayers, and taxpayers. But will Davis pay a price next year at the polls? Only time, and the political spinmeisters, will tell. CPR

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What became

of consumer choice?

by John Campbell

In contrast to our electrical energy shortage, we Californians have an over-abundance of pundits explaining the crisis: too little power plant construction, too much red tape, "gaming" by out-of-state generators, errors made by the Public Utilities Commission, flaws in the "deregulation" bill, the utilities' financial irregularities, and a governor asleep at the wheel. But while these and other contributing factors have been exhaustively examined, one essential ingredient of a truly free, deregulated market has been ignored: consumer choice.

When the misnamed "deregulation" bill passed in 1996, more than 300 new companies applied to provide consumer choice in electric power. If you lived in an area served by Southern California Edison, for example, you would still pay them for bringing you your electricity and for the service and maintenance of their system. But you could buy the actual power itself from one of these 300 new competitors. Some would offer the power cheaper. Others would offer "green" power for those who wish to buy from renewable energy sources. Others might offer, along with the power, a package of benefits to entice your business. In other words: free enterprise. That's how your phone service works now. You may pay Pacific Bell a fee for using the phone lines to your house, but you have many choices for long distance and local toll service. This system has resulted in the lowest prices for long distance service ever as companies add capacity and compete.

But now, five years after these 300 competitors started up, all but a few survivors — you do not need all the fingers on one hand to count them — are out of business or have left the state. What happened to these so-called ESPs ("electrical service providers") and the competitive market? They never had a chance. The "deregulation" bill set up a cost structure that paid all the utilities' general and administrative costs as part of the amount you pay for bringing the electricity to you. The

John Campbell, who represents California's 70th Assembly District (Irvine), is a member of the Assembly Special Committee on Energy Cost and Availability and the Oversight Committee on Electrical Energy.

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The Energy Crisis: Perspective

Took office with the union on the brink of civil war.

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." - Abraham Lincoln

Took office with the world already fighting World War II.

"The price of greatness is responsibility."- Winston Churchill.

Took office during a booming California economy with record budget surpluses.

"I have inherited a bad situation." - Gray Davis

Flyer distributed by the California Assembly Republican Caucus

ESPs were trying to beat competitors with no overhead, who could sell their product at cost or a loss, and who started with 100 percent of the market. By comparison, Microsoft is hanging on to its competitive life with Windows! It's amazing any ESPs remain at all.

Because of the failure of this market that never really was, some advocates of intrusive government are calling for a state takeover of all or part of California's electrical system. Now there's an idea. Put this entire, enormously complex and interconnected system in the control of a handful of civil service bureaucrats. If they make a bad decision, the whole state pays the price while they keep their jobs at the same pay! Remember that until recently, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's rates were so uncompetitive that businesses were leaving for this reason alone. And some of these state takeover proponents have a more sinister motive. It involves using this control over such an important commodity to advance their pet social or environmental agendas.

Nothing keeps your price in line like a competitor with a lower one. I know. I am in a retail business myself. It's just a fact of human behavior — one socialists past and present have never understood. We can correct the system so that competitors can enter the market on an even footing. Pennsylvania has that system now and dozens of electrical service providers are fighting for every customer. Some 35 percent of customers buy electricity from one of these new competitors. As a result, Pennsylvania has plenty of electricity at a fraction of the cost we pay now (not to mention the new higher rates we will soon see).

The current system has clearly failed. The "old" regulated system provided us costs 50 percent above the national average. But a state takeover will make that seem cheap. Only a competitive market with real consumer choice will turn electricity from a liability into a component of the California dream. CPR

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COMMITTING ACADEMIC FRAUD

Closing Students' Minds

An unedifying tale of liberal hypocrisy carried to almost *Animal Farm* lengths — the venerable Jesuit-run University of San Francisco goes politically correct.

BY JAMES BEMIS

A firestorm of protest has erupted in, of all places, the venerable Jesuit-run University of San Francisco. Students and alumni are inflamed, and there's even been a '60s' style march and demonstration. Several heavyweights signed an open letter of protest against what is being called an assault on academic freedom. It has all the earmarks of an old-time, left-wing uprising, except for one thing: the roles are reversed. Among the "heavyweights" signing the protest letter was former Education Secretary William Bennett. And the villians attacking diversity on campus and academic freedom are the University's Jesuit administrators — members of a once-

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proud order formerly known as the "Pope's Marines," but perhaps better described nowadays as the "Pope's Saboteurs." It all adds up to an unedifying tale of liberal hypocrisy carried to almost *Animal Farm* lengths, with the self-annointed champions of free thought themselves leading the suppression of dissent and trying to impose a conformist straitjacket on the minds of university faculty and students.

GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM

A little background: USF's new president, Jesuit Father Stephen Privett, recently all-but-abolished the St. Ignatius Institute, a widely-respected great books program within USF known for its faithfulness to Catholic teachings. SII was notably politically incorrect. Now Father Privett has moved to end its ability to function as an innovative, quasi-independent educational entity within the university. Father Privett fired SII's longtime administrators, John Galten and John Hamlon, and subsumed the program in something called the Catholic Studies Program, where its formerly unique character will be lost. Privett's coup, undertaken in secrecy, capped years of hostility toward SII from USF's liberal theology faculty. In protest, six SII professors resigned from the university.

Although enrolling less than five percent of the student body, SII — where students study classical works in literature, history, philosophy, and theology — regularly attracted a disproportionate number of the university's brightest students. Furthermore, the program's students repeatedly took home USF's top academic honors. In 1998, SII received an award from the prestigious Templeton Foundation declaring it one of the finest great-books programs in the country. It was the home of several distinguished leaders of the Catholic Church, including its founder, Father Joseph Fessio, and noted theologian Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis.

Father Privett — who prefers wearing bow ties to a Roman collar in public — said it was a move to save money. Later, he blamed Messrs. Galten and Hamlon's lack of academic credentials. Finally, he said it was intended to improve integration of SII students with the student body.

So why would USF want to dump a successful program that brought such honor and glory to the university? If a story that keeps changing indicates mendacity, this one oozes with it. First, Father Privett — who prefers wearing bow ties to a Roman collar in public — said it was a move to save money. Later, he blamed Messrs. Galten and Hamlon's lack of academic credentials. Finally, he said it was intended to improve integration of SII students with the student body at large.

A MORE SINISTER MOTIVE

I suspect a more sinister motive. Last year, the American bishops voted overwhelmingly to institute *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a decree by Pope John Paul II specifying general principles for Catholic higher education. Its purpose is to stem corruption of Church teaching in Catholic institutions. Even if only as a truth-in-advertising matter, one wouldn't expect such a move — attempting to insure that what is labeled Catholic education actually is Catholic education — to generate concerted opposition. It requires, for instance, that theologians at Catholic universities obtain a mandate from the

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James Bemis is a member of California Political Review's *editorial board. His column appears each Wednesday on* California Political Review Online *(www. cppf.org). He also writes regularly for the web site* e3mil.com's "The Edge."

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local bishop to teach and declare loyalty to the Church's teaching authority — the very authority, of course, that alone distinguishes *these* theologians from anyone else — you, or me, or the fellow on the soap-box in the park — who might take it into his or her head to instruct students about God and religion. Asking a *Catholic* University theologian to declare his loyalty to Catholic teaching authority is little more than asking him to declare loyalty to himself, to his *own* authority as a *Catholic* theologian, an authority to teach that derives, plainly, from that of the Church. The world is full of theologians who reject Catholic authority by the simple method of teaching under some auspices other than one titled "Catholic." Those that wish to reject it but still wear the Catholic mantel want to lie. Plainly, no institution can maintain its integrity allowing such nonsense.

MARK OF CONFUSION

But, of course, despite its reasonableness, or perhaps because of it, *Ex Corde* has been about as popular with many Catholic colleges as a revival of the Hayes decency code would be in Hollywood. It is, surely, a mark of how confused many of these colleges' administrators are about their institutions' most essential purposes that many of them have desperately sought ways around the edict since its approval last November.

Ex Corde is scheduled to be implemented this May, a date following, by about three months, the sacking of SII, whose faculty had already signed the mandate of loyalty to Church teaching authority. USF's "liberals" executed what can reasonably be called a pre-emptive strike — all in the name, to be sure, of academic freedom: a Catholic University silencing its own Catholic conscience in an apparent attempt to safeguard its ability to wear the Catholic label fraudulently.

Fr. Privett's USF administration is like a quiet takeover of a much-respected retail firm by a gang of scoundrels who mean to fleece its unsuspecting customers by passing off now-worthless goods under cover of their label's painstakingly built-up good name.

APPEAL TO ROME

On March 24, ignoring the protests of USF students and alumni, the USF Board — one-third composed of Father Privett's fellow Jesuits — voted 30 to 2 to support the "final solution" for traditionalism on campus. A formal appeal has been made to Rome, petitioning the Holy Father to intervene on the grounds that SII's destruction violates the spirit, to put it mildly, of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

This liberal assault on SII is the opposite of a defense of academic freedom. It is as if flat-worlders had taken over the Institute for the Study of our Round Globe, fired everyone who thought the world circular, but then refused to change the outfit's name or self-portrayal. For another comparison, Fr. Privett's USF administration is like a quiet takeover of a much-respected retail firm by a gang of scoundrels who mean to fleece its unsuspecting customers by passing off now-worthless goods under cover of their label's painstakingly built-up good name — a sort-of Ponzi scheme, to be sure, bound to collapse as soon as the suckers see through the fraud, but, 'til then, the pickings will likely be good. It is an injustice to SII's students and facuty, an act of gross hypocrisy, actually reducing diversity in the name of academic freedom, and yet another indication of how feeble "liberal" educators' commitment is to real liberal education. CPR

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

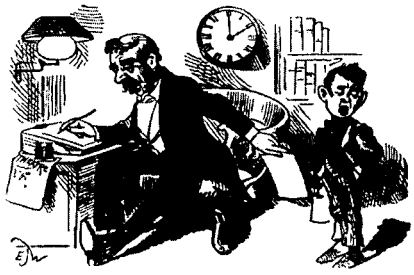
den migrant workers, Chavez's thugs committed many acts of violence against both legal and illegal workers if they refused to join his union or if they threatened union jobs. Indeed, California's farm workers enjoyed the highest wages among America's farm workers before Chavez got into the act. Chavez is a Hollywood-created fraud; Columbus, Jefferson, King, and other Holiday honorees are not. Oh by the way, Columbus didn't enslave anyone, the spreading of various illness to natives was not a purposeful act, Jefferson's alleged trysts have never been documented, and I don't support FDR's social contract.

I enjoy *CPR,* but in "Farmyard Fraud," Mr. Baldwin wrote: "In the 1970s Chavez became a follower of a group called Synanon, long thought by observers to be a cult that had on occasion used violence and intimidation to silence its enemies." I was around in those years. Synanon, basically, was set up to rehabilitate heroin addicts. They may have had their problems later — like many organizations that start off with a good idea and the best intentions but whose leadership goes a little bit wacko — but it really was at one time very prominent at rehabilitating heroin addicts. Unfortunately, Mr. Baldwin gives the idea that it was just some religious kook group with a violent leader. It's not too often I find something in *CPR* that might bother me because you're really right on about just about everything.

Kenneth Weitzman
South Lake Tahoe

'Scorp'

Three cheers to *CPR* ("Political Difference Maker," March/April 2001) for spotlighting Bill Saracino's tremendous, good impact within the Conservative Movement. Pat Nolan's thoughtful and appreciative article spoke well to Bill's accomplishments and selfless motivations — as one of the "next generation," I can personally attest to them. I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Bill since the late 1980s. During my time with Young Americans for Freedom, especially as state chairman, Bill was a tremendous source of history, ideas, resources, and encouragement. Like Pat Nolan, I too was heartened by Bill's strength of faith and character when he faced the real prospect of permanent deafness. He kept perspective and a positive attitude through the whole challenge! Although his *new* chal-



lenges in liberal Hollywood will take much of his time, I know Bill simply will not resist giving solid counsel and support to up-and-coming conservatives. Thank you, Bill, for all you have done and continue to do!

Jon Fleischman
Irvine

Not Time to Split

As much as I feel betrayed by big business' support of liberal Democrat candidates and issues, I cannot support the split-roll tax plan ("Time to Split?" *CPR,* Sept./Oct. 2000). Firstly, not all businesses supported the liberal wing of the Democrat Party, and some of those who did may have done so out of fear of governmental retaliation, arguably such as the DOJ attack on Microsoft.

Secondly, businesses do not pay taxes. They pass the added expense of taxes to consumers as higher prices, to employees as layoffs or just fewer raises and new hires, and to stock holders as reduced dividends, less R&D, and less plant improvement. Business taxes are a form of double taxation.

Thirdly, it is the left that changes sides for political expediency, to accrue, maintain, and consolidate power, to punish opponents and reward supporters. We on the right should not support a basically socialist policy simply to get back at those who betrayed us, especially when our policies, issues, and ideology has heretofore benefited the betrayers.

Fourthly, we need to convince big business of the rightness of our cause, and not bludgeon them for their support of our opponents. How can we show them that we are the defenders of their rights if we throw in with the enemies of their rights? Will not our support of a socialist taxation policy be a greater betrayal than big business' bankrolling of their true political enemies? Would it not be the economically conservative equivalent of a Republican going pro-abortion and anti-gun?

Let the left fight for the split-role tax, while we vigorously oppose it as a conservative, ideological principle grounded in Truth. Let us communicate this to big business to show them that their support of he left is like selling rope to one's own hangman. Let us not punish those who in their own best interest should be our allies; let us instead teach them that fact.

Norman Hines
Ridgecrest

Special Accolade

I have been a subscriber to *CPR* for a couple of years now and I find your magazine a must read for what is happening on California's political scene. I would like to however give you a special accolade for the March/April issue. This was in my opinion one of your best. Keep up the great work on keeping
us informed.

Russ Hopkins
Moorpark

CPR

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CRITICUS

Sticks and Stones

BY G.B. TENNYSON

Sticks and stones break only bones,
But *names* can really hurt me.

— adapted by Criticus

IT'S AN increasingly familiar story. Item — California Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, while addressing a gathering of black leaders, used the other N-word in reciting a list of organizations that had the word "Negro" in them. Some in the audience got up and walked out. Item — A black minister in Washington, D.C., speaking to a group of homosexual activists, used some pejorative terms for homosexuals (actual words not specified in the news story), and shock waves ran through the crowd. Some in the audience walked out. Item — The prizefighter Oscar de la Hoya, in a Spanish-language newspaper interview about his having successfully broken his contract with his former manager Bob Arum, boasted that he had "defeated one of the biggest Jews to come out of Harvard." In retaliation, Irv Rubin of the Jewish Defense League on the Larry Elder radio talk show called de la Hoya a "Mexican Nazi" and vowed that his group would hound de la Hoya, picket his house, protest at his future boxing matches, and so on. Item — West Virginia Democrat Senator Robert Byrd spoke on television of there being such things as "white niggers." Result: general uproar in the media.

What all these instances have in common is obvious enough: public figures using contemptuous terms for members of some group or other, thereby provoking outrage among members of that group and among keepers of the public conscience. What they also have in common is that within a day of their utterance, the perpetrators all issued abject public apologies. (Elder bet Rubin a dinner at Canter's that de la Hoya would apologize immediately. Elder won.) In almost every case these apologies insisted that the offending speaker had never in his entire life entertained anything but the deepest respect and highest regard for the group(s) he had just offended. They all assured us that the language they used had never been used in their homes or among their associates, that they weren't brought up that way, that they believe in God and apple pie. De la Hoya's apology is typical. It reads in part: "I did

G.B. Tennyson maintained verbal purity for many years in the English Department at UCLA where he once sought, unsuccessfully, to have his title read: Charlotte Mary Yonge Professor of Victorian Literature. He serves as CPR's *unreconstructed word watcher and quondam proofreader.*

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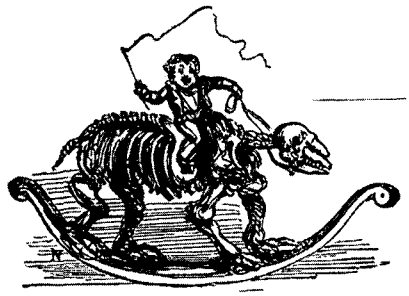
not mean to insult Bob Arum and his family or any ethnic or religious group in any way. I humbly apologize to anyone the remarks may have offended .... I never forget I'm a Mexican-American, born and raised in East Los Angeles by a wonderful mother and father, brought up God-fearing and having deep respect for all humankind, no matter what their race or religion."



It almost seems as though there's a mysterious force, a kind of malign spirit, dare we even say without giving offense an anti-brownie (I refer to the goblin creatures from children's stories), that, instead of doing good, goes about popping insulting words into the mouths of persons who otherwise never even heard these words, much less actually used them. At least ex-Klansman Senator Byrd acknowledged that his offensive term "dates back to my boyhood," thus conceding that he had actually known the term, albeit from sometime like 75 or 80 years ago. Criticus can't recall whether Jesse Jackson used the boyhood excuse a few years back when he referred to New York City as "Hymietown." Possibly he just called it an "oversight," his current all-purpose term for his lax accounting and other missteps.

At least ex-Klansman Senator Byrd acknowledged that his offensive term 'dates back to my boyhood.'

Constant Readers, and perhaps In-Constant ones as well, are by now thinking, "Yes, we've heard all this before, not least from Criticus himself, who has been shooting his arrows at the politically correct from his barbican in the Castle of Verbal Veracity for quite some time now." True enough. Not that these Critical shafts have driven the Enemy away. He remains at the gates. Indeed, the Enemy has pretty well occupied all the surrounding territory and is busy re-contouring the landscape. Hills have been flattened, rivers diverted from their courses, walls and fences dismantled and relocated, fields blighted. It's not just that the past is another country, as has been insightfully said, but the present is now another country, and the future certain to be yet another.

To dispense with all the metaphorical language, let me explain that what is striking about the current obsession with terms of racial, ethnic, and/or religious abuse is the way in which it has become a kind of new Victorianism. Now, the Victorians have often been roundly berated for their squeamishness, especially in regard to sexual matters. The lower orders, as they were known, who inhabited such as the squalid areas of east London with whole families squeezed into a room or two, were hardly strangers to the raw side of life. Their children could fetch gin from the pub, which had no licensing hours, and laudanum was readily available without prescription. It has been estimated that 25 percent of the women in London in the mid-nineteenth century were prostitutes, which accounts for the large number of Magdalen homes and for such antics as Prime Minister Gladstone's roaming the London streets at night seeking to rescue "fallen women" and set them on the path to righteousness. In short, not all Victorians were characters out of the novels of Charlotte Mary Yonge, a now sadly neglected writer whom even the most relentless feminists have been unable to reinterpret for the politically correct and who has therefore been banished from academic discourse.

All the same, among the cultivated classes, and especially among the sort of gentlewomen who read and indeed populated Charlotte Mary Yonge's novels, the sensitivity about matters sexual was extreme. The mention of the word "leg," for example, could cause palpitations to the delicate. This accounts for the covering of piano legs, lest the sight of them naked bring to mind their human counterparts. It accounts for the almost total absence of any remotely graphic descriptions of sexual activity in virtually all Victorian novels. There could be subtle innuendo, of course, as when Thackeray has Pendennis (hero of the novel of the same name) loiter about in the area of Covent Garden, which was code for frequenting houses of prostitution. As for the love that dare not speak its name, in Victorian times it had no name to speak. The very word "homosexual" does not appear until 1892 in the translation of Krafft-Ebbing's *Psychopathia Sexualis.* As for "lesbian," the word meant simply "relating to the island of Lesbos," especially in relation to Lesbian wine, which was not a

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tribadic love potion but a prized wine of classical antiquity. And until the 1890s, when it was first used to indicate female homosexuality, the word "Sapphic" meant only a particular kind of metre in classical verse associated with Sappho. When Queen Victoria was urged to include women in a bill making homosexual activity a criminal offence she declined on the ground that no woman could possibly ever do such a thing.

What is striking about the current obsession with terms of racial, ethnic, and/or religious abuse is the way it has become a kind of new Victorianism.

THE REASON for this excursion down Memory Lane is not only to point out how drastically things have changed in less than a century — for Victorian attitudes persisted well into the twentieth century — but to note that some things have not so much changed as they have changed places. Victorian prudery about sex has been overthrown with a vengeance. Something as commonplace now as a department store underwear ad in the daily paper would do worse for the Victorians than merely "bring a blush to the cheek of the Young Person" (the Victorian guideline for what was impermissible in polite society), it would cause fainting among the ladies and rage among the gentlemen. At the same time, modern shapers of thought and attitude have replaced all that sexual prudery with another sort. This New Victorianism — and modern *bien pensants* would hate such a term — has transferred all of the exaggerated delicacy of feeling that Victorians brought to sex with an equally exaggerated delicacy of feeling about race and ethnicity. It is indeed Verbal Prudery.

Virtually all accounts of public outrage over offensive terms such as those with which this discourse began contain descriptions of the shock, the horror, the wounded disbelief with which the insulting terms were greeted. Women who want females in the military to be eligible for combat, veterans of street demonstrations, angry million-something-or-other marchers, hardened survivors of inner-city gang warfare, participants in the San Francisco "Gay Pride" parade — all these are brought to tears by "offensive" terms. They leave the room, they call down the wrath of Heaven (this is done by speaking to reporters), they declare they have never heard anything so hurtful. It's enough to make grown men weep, as it used to be possible to say.

By contrast the Victorians had far less difficulty with racial designations, though the well-bred would of course avoid any terms thought to be intentionally hurtful, as would indeed the well-bred today (if "well-bred" is still an acceptable term). Criticus has before him a copy of that one-time children's classic, now as close to a banned book as we get in our society, namely, *The Story of Little Black Sambo.* So thoroughly has this book fallen from favor that few realize that it was written and illustrated to entertain her two little girls by a Victorian gentlewoman living in India at the end of the nineteenth century. The book is set in India, not Africa as is widely thought, and Sambo is an Indian boy. Even today the British refer to East Indians as being black. Criticus is almost afraid to mention that Sambo's parents are called Black Mumbo and Black Jumbo and that the author went on to write *Little Black Mingo, Little Black Quibba,* and *Little Black Quasha.* All of these Indian characters are treated affectionately by the author and are not meant to be objects of ridicule.

One should add that the author, Helen Bannerman, born in Scotland in 1862 and educated at St. Andrews University, was among the first writers of children's literature to make words and pictures of equal importance. In this she was followed, and eclipsed, by Beatrix Potter, whose works are far from banned but are rather an industry in themselves. This proves it is safer to write about animals than people, just as it is safer to have animals as mascots than people. Of course that may change with the next tide of political correctness, if militant animal rights lovers have their way. Imagine an army of People for the Ethical Treatment of the Banana Slug (PET-BS) descending upon UC Santa Cruz.

Not surprisingly, these things move at different paces for different folk. Thus even now in Blair's Britain, which prides itself on being multi-racial and multicultural (the country is still 95 percent white), one can

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read headlines in the tabloids like "Frogs Say No to British Beef" and "Krauts Lose in World Cup." And only the other day Criticus read this in a British periodical: "... it's one thing to let the Japs build your car and the Chinks supply your cuddly toys ...." Try writing that in the *New Republic.* But side by side with such language stands the edict of an institution called Stockport College near Manchester, England, which has banned the use of such offensive words as "lady" and "gentleman" (they have class implications), "history," "postman," and "chairman" (sexist), "mad," "manic," and "crazy" (upsetting to the mentally ill), and even the expression "slaving over a hot stove" (it minimizes the horrors of slavery).

The really sinister part of all this lather about names and terms is that at bottom it is, as was Victorian prudery, a type of social control.

BACK ON the California home front, however, I am informed that Mexican-Americans often refer to blacks as *"mayetes"* and Chinese as *"Chinquistas."* The latter is presumably equivalent to the British usage cited above, and the former is said to be a particularly repulsive black fly that feeds on feces. Next to that, a term like "wetback" seems almost endearing, and "whitey" has absolutely no sting at all.

These negative terms merely illustrate what we all know — that distinct groups will inevitably have pejorative terms for other groups. We also know that common civility argues against using such terms, especially in the public forum. What is often forgotten, however, is that frequently the power of contemptuous terms has been negated by their adoption by the very groups being reviled. For example, "Christian" was once one such term. But one must tread gingerly. Only members of the reviled group may use the negative term without penalty unless and until it becomes common. They say that inner-city youths regularly and jocularly refer to one another with the N-word. "Hey [N-word]," they call as they pass the basketball. There is also some sort of musical group calling itself "Niggaz with Attitude." But, again, only those who belong have such freedom. At Stockport College they ban "queer" and "cripple," except where "gay and disabled people have 'reclaimed' them."

Here's a further example or two of such reclamation. The current issue of the UCLA student-fee-supported magazine called *TenPercent* has on its cover a sexually ambiguous photo of two persons embracing and in very large, black letters the word "Queer?" across the arm of one of them. Not to be outdone or even remotely challenged by that, the current student-funded feminist magazine, *FEM,* has a cover with a piece of "artwork" so graphic that it makes Mapplethorpe's photos look suitable for *Jack and Jill* magazine. It quite defies any Critical skill to describe this picture for readers of a family magazine. Suffice it to say that the illustration is designed to accompany and vivify the phrase "the-BLOODYissue" emblazoned across the cover in white, then red, then white letters. The issue is dedicated to menstruation.

The really sinister part of all this lather about names and terms is that at bottom it is, as was Victorian prudery, a type of social control. It has been shrewdly observed that one reason the Victorians were so concerned over sexual allusions, however far-fetched, such as piano legs or women riding bicycles (you can't do it sidesaddle as with horses), was that the sexual urges and inclinations were throbbing just below the surface and likely to erupt if not kept in severe check. In this they may have been prescient: at least such attitudes prevented having day-care centers in public high schools for all the unwed mothers. It has also been observed that Victorian attitudes carried a heavy dose of hypocrisy, and this too is true. There were many sexual scandals among the quality folk, adulteries, unwed couples, seductions of servant girls by masters, the famous male brothel in Cleveland Street, to say nothing of Oscar Wilde. (Note: there is a new statue of a recumbent Wilde at Charing Cross, which has provoked criticism not because it is of a notorious sodomite, as the Victorians would have had it, but because it depicts him — prepare yourself — smoking a cigarette!)

So, just as Victorian sexual prudery maintained a

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desired social code, so the purpose of all this fainting over the sound of a negative word is to insure that such words never get uttered. In this the word controllers have enjoyed considerable success, as we have seen from the apologies cited at the outset. Just lately the news services revealed that in South Dakota "offensive town names" are to be changed to remove the words "Squaw" or "Negro." Criticus has argued in these pages in the past that he can find no lexical justification for the argument that "squaw" means anything other than "woman" or related innocuous terms, but possibly there is secret knowledge kept hidden among Native Americans (note the sensitive usage) until now. So Squaw Lake will become Serenity Lake and, perhaps more understandably, Squaw Teat Creek will become East Rattlesnake Creek, though that does seem rather sinister. As for place names with "Negro" — now becoming almost as forbidden as the other N-word — they will rename Negro Gulch as Last Chance Gulch (not a very happy substitute) and Negro Creek will become Medicine Mountain Creek. A total of 39 place names will be changed. Criticus studied his Rand-McNally to find these offending places but could not; they must be very small indeed. On the other hand, there are many large areas clearly marked on the map as the so-and-so "Indian Reservation," which is bound to offend the descendants of squaws. For that matter, why are they not renaming the Black Hills the African-American Hills?

With the release of Census Bureau data, there are now legally recognized no fewer than 57 Heinzian varieties of racial identity.

Another recent strike of the word-hawks, though one less likely to succeed nationwide, I should think, is the measure passed by the San Diego City Council to ban the use of the word "minority" in city documents or discussions. I wonder whether this means there can be no more minority reports. And I wonder whether we will have a modern version of the beadle, that honored figure stationed of yore in churches and equipped with a kind of long pole, which he used to strike the head of anyone caught napping during the service, a true wake-up call. The modern Word-Beadle could tap the noggin of anyone who used "minority" or any other offensive word during public meetings. A whole new vocational field would open up, and schools of education could offer courses in verbal beadlery.

There would be much for a Word-Beadle to learn. Indeed, I am beginning to envision a whole degree program. As has been extensively, though all too solemnly, reported with the release of Census Bureau data, there are now legally recognized no fewer than 57 Heinzian varieties of racial identity. This is as risible as it is arbitrary in that it provides no terms for various European ethnicities, or for that matter Asian ones (is little Sambo Asian?), but it does offer other racial combinations of extraordinary complexity. The six traditional racial classifications of the Census — white, black, American Indian/Alaska native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and (the all-purpose) Other — are now joined by combinations so convoluted that one must marvel that a Washington bureaucrat could have dreamed them up. Probably it required many bureaucrats, many hours, and much money. There are not just the obvious combinations, such as "white,black" and "white,Asian," and "black,other" (as these are written by the Census), but combinations like "white, black, Am. Indian/Alaska native, Asian, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, other." That's one classification. If the distribution of races in someone fitting that category were equal it would appear to require six grandparents. Obviously the mixture is unequal, but in what way? Was there one parent with four racial parts and one with two? Is this concern not reminiscent of those old categories like quadroon and octoroon? Clearly those courses in verbal beadledom should require aspiring Word-Beadles to learn all the 57 varieties of classification so as to insure that no one on the city council mis-describes a member of what he may no longer call a minority.

Well, enough of this drollery. One would like to think that the Census categories will collapse of their own inanity, but being government funded they are

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likely to continue and to grow — as is the general obsession on the left with "offensive" language and with controlling our response to it and indeed to all things. We might try getting the Census to adopt one more category, one that surprisingly is actually operative in the University of California system, namely the category "Decline to State." Beyond that, we must strive to keep ourselves as unspotted from the verbal tyranny of the self-righteous as good Victorians sought to keep themselves from the temptations of the flesh. CPR

FILM

Hollywood's Great Work Continues, But Not In Hollywood

BY JAMES BEMIS

NOT LONG ago, my wife and I — both of us film lovers — thought we'd take in a movie. She glanced at the newspaper: "Here's one about a meteor headed for Earth."

"I know how it ends. What else?"

"Well, there's a comedy about a sadomasochistic killer who lures teenagers to gruesome deaths via the Internet."

"Doesn't sound too funny to me."

"Here's one about a boy whose father's an alcoholic, his mother commits suicide, and then he's molested by a priest."

We wound up listening to music.

James Bemis, a member of California Political Review's *editorial board, with this issue inaugurates his regular column as* CPR's *film critic. Mr. Bemis, a columnist for e3mil.com's "The Edge," recently wrote "Through the Eyes of the Church," a five-part series on the Vatican's list of the 45 most important films of all-time, published in* The Wanderer, *the nation's oldest Catholic weekly.*

The following day, I wandered by the video section at my local library. A friend had recommended a foreign film so I checked their collection. It was there: a Danish movie called *Babette's Feast.* It turned out to be a gem.

In the film, two sisters on the Danish seacoast help their father, the local pastor, tend his flock of aging villagers. Their housekeeper, Babette, celebrates winning the lottery by cooking the townspeople a lavish French meal. Somewhere between the cooking and eating, the celebration becomes a spiritual event, and a paean to the human heart. It had been a long time since I was that moved by a film, in which a profound story was so simply and superbly told. Few in Hollywood even attempt — let alone achieve — anything so noble nowadays, preferring to employ their talents wallowing in sex and gore. (And, unfortunately, money.) Watching *Babette's Feast* was like being raised on rap music and then hearing Mozart or Bach for the first time. Realizing what a tremendous source of beauty I'd missed by ignoring foreign movies, I began a quest to find more.

Luckily, my local library has a great video collection, including hundreds of foreign films. Starting with the French — for my money, the world's best filmmakers — I was dazzled by *Children of Paradise,* among the best movies ever made, relating the story of a theater troupe working Paris' "Boulevard of Crime" during the mid-1800s. Four men — all quite different — fall in love with the courtesan Garance, wonderfully played by Arletty, who is the essence of femininity. What raises the film to the level of great art is the extraordinary screenplay written by poet Jacque Prevert. More than merely a script, Prevert's language sparkles (in translation, no less!), bringing freshness even to that most familiar of subjects: love.

Now I was hooked.

AFTER SOME research, I discovered the towering figure of French cinema, the great writer and di-

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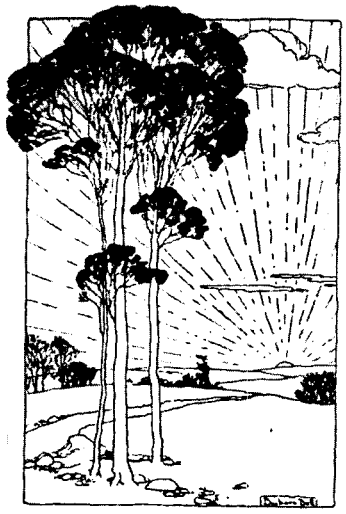
rector Marcel Pagnol. His 1934 classic, *The Baker's Wife,* defies classification — it's both funny and heartbreaking — and makes obvious that Pagnol loves not only his characters, but humanity itself.

In addition to noteworthy films made by Pagnol are those made about him: *My Father's Glory* and *My Mother's Castle,* based on the director's autobiography. These are richly-told accounts of his upbringing in pre-WWI France. Finally, I recommend two based on novels by Pagnol: *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring.* Both are superb films.

But it is perhaps the work of Italian filmmakers that most poignantly reflects the cataclysm of World War II and its aftermath as played out in European society. Roberto Rossellini's rough but electric *Open City* takes place — and was filmed — during the Nazi occupation of Rome, portraying the suffering of the Italian Resistance as they await their Allied liberators. Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* — a staple of film classes — is a brilliant odyssey of poverty and determination in the war's wake; humanity observed with Dickensian compassion, yet completely without illusions.

Japan's cinema is dominated by the towering figure of Akira Kurosawa. His 1950 film, the uneven but ground breaking *Rashomon,* first brought international attention to Japanese filmmakers. Like many gifted artists, Kurosawa mellowed as he aged, his youthful cynicism ripening into a deep appreciation for the beauty of human relationships, culminating in his simple, poetic *Dersu Uzala,* a work about manly friendship that ranks with the best of John Ford's great movies — as high a word of praise as I can give.

Kurosawa is by no means Japan's only noteworthy director: Kon Ichikawa's 1967 anti-war epic, *The Burmese Harp,* is one of the best of its kind, as moving a depiction of human brotherhood as has ever been filmed. It's a rich film about a man's spiritual jour-



ney, full of poetic imagery and paying beautiful homage to both Buddhism and Christianity.

These movies — which barely begin the exploration of great foreign films — proved to be my beginning of a profoundly absorbing odyssey through international cinema's too rarely (by Americans, anyway) traveled waters. What's so attractive about the best foreign films — and nearly completely lacking in Hollywood now — is their plain humanity, subtlety, and maturity in exploring the human spirit: unjaded, natural, almost innocent. Despite their boasts of artistic freedom, most American movies today limit themselves to a quite narrow, childishly shallow realm: bizarre sexual situations, extreme violence, a world peopled by juvenile, comic-book characters. Watching these films, it's hard to recognize anything resembling truth or reality on the screen.

That's not to say there's no place for fantasy or fictionalized material in artistic creations. Who's more imaginative than, say, the great Italian director Federico Fellini? But modern filmmakers use violence and sex as a crutch, trying to disguise a lack of talent and creativity with gunpowder smoke and steamy mirrors.

The great work once done in Hollywood is still carried on — only not in Hollywood. It's done in Paris and Tokyo, Rome and Copenhagen, Warsaw and other international cities. But directors of most foreign films lack the technology and mammoth budgets of today's Tinseltown. Thus, these filmmakers concentrate on the basics of their trade, undistracted by special effects gadgetry, massive egos, and cutthroat competition.

These basics, though — plot, character, dialog — are the elements of great storytelling anyway, enabling these directors to turn their deficiencies into assets. What the wonderful movies mentioned here have — and Hollywood has, in large part, lost — might best be summed up in the word "soul": that inexplicable blend of spirit, mind, and heart encountered in great art, the trumpet call to our noblest emotions. The best films, like all profound creative endeavors, provide a penetrating glimpse into the real truth about God's greatest and most interesting creation — the human species. CPR

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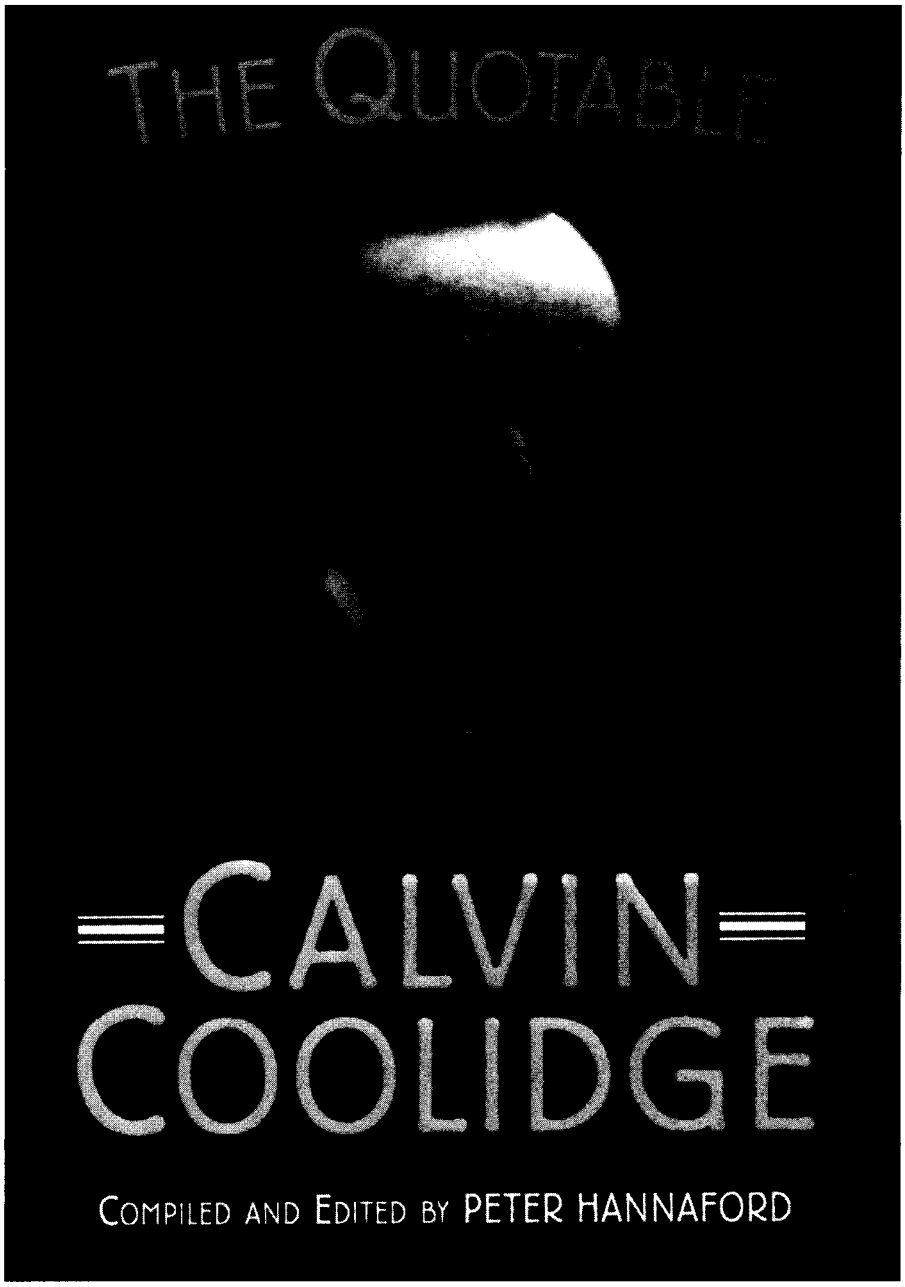
Republican Sage



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